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L A L.

CHAPTER I.

TOO LATE!

TEN years ago, near the point where the road from Hellbender to Bill Dodd's Cañon crosses Wildcat Creek, there stood on a rocky knoll, rising from a prairie stretching for many miles in every direction, a log-cabin, consisting of what, in the vernacular of that region, is known as "two pens and a passage." This structure was of the rudest and most primitive description. It was built of unhewed logs, rough with the bark they wore as they stood in the forest high up on the mountain-side. The wide spaces between them were "chinked" with bits of stone and wood, and the rafters were covered in some places with slabs of cottonwood and in others with pieces of old tents and various similar materials, that originally had served for far different purposes. The chinking had not been done with that thoroughness that the honest workman puts into every piece he turns out from his hands, for there were many crevices that allowed the wind to enter freely, and that in the winter made the cabin rather uncomfortable for the inhabitants; for the winters in that part of the country were hard, beginning early and ending late, and being severe while they lasted.

There was no stint of space in the rooms of this cabin

321 [illegible]

or in the passage-way between them. The architect that had presided over its construction was evidently a man not fettered by rules of symmetry or of proportion; but he was just as clearly one endowed with large ideas. He had set out to build a house in which he could not only "swing a cat by the tail" without danger of breaking the animal's skull, but one also in which he could move about with that freedom which those who live much in the open air regard as indispensable for their comfort; and certainly he had succeeded in his task more completely than many more ambitious and better educated architects had done before him. It was not an elegant house, but it suited him and those who were to occupy it with him, and, as he had constructed it for his own and their use, no one else had any right to find fault with his methods. Occasionally, when the wind blew especially hard, and rifts of snow or sprays of rain came driving in through the unchinked spaces between the logs, his wife or daughter might venture on a word or two of complaint; but this was seldom, and the murmurings were so evidently reasonable that he did not have it in his heart to contradict them.

Then, again, the doors were a good deal too small for the apertures they were intended to close, and thus another means of ventilation was afforded. Being hung on leathern hinges, made from pieces of old boots, they sagged more than was altogether compatible with smooth and easy motion. The windows, however, by their size, compensated to some extent for the smallness of the doors, for as he himself—the architect and owner—had graphically put it, "they was so darnation tight that they would neither open when they was shet nor shet when they was open." The chimney, built of sticks crossed, "pig-pen fashion," and daubed with clay, had never since its erection been strictly vertical. It had been blown down once, and washed down twice by the tornadoes and rain-storms so common in the

country, and with each rebuilding had been set up with less regard for the principles of perpendicularity governing the construction of chimneys, until now, at a little distance, it looked not unlike an enormous centiped crawling up the side of the house. As to the roof, it had been carried away several times by the winds, and in spite of its numerous patches always let in more or less water when rain or snow fell. Indeed, it would have been easy on any clear night to study the motions of the stars through its many openings.

But, for all these things, the house was, as the owner remarked to an intending purchaser, who had called on him that day—and of whom we shall presently have more to say—"a darn sight better warmin'-place in a cold snap than half the ranches the boys has in these parts; and ef you don't believe me, stranger, jist you try one o' them cabins over at The Cañon some night when a blizzard's blowin' and ef you don't wish you was here you may call me a liar."

This confidence of the owner in the comfort-giving qualities of his house had apparently not been unheeded by the new-comer; for the bargain had been struck without his attempting the terrible experiment suggested, and consequently without the opportunity of questioning the veracity of the gentleman with whom he was dealing.

Possession was given immediately, and then Jim Bosler and his wife and daughter entered a wagon, into which a pair of stout horses, ostensibly belonging to that individual, had been hitched, and drove slowly down the winding road leading to the plain below. And John Tyscovus began the occupation of his newly acquired estate, embracing not only the house, but the knoll, a rude hut at its base that served as a stable, and about ten acres of prairie-land.

The purchaser had walked twenty miles that day, and was tired; so he made a big fire of cottonwood logs, ate

his supper of hard bread and toasted bacon, and then, lighting his pipe, sat by the fire, absorbing its heat while he puffed great whiffs of smoke from his mouth. For nearly half an hour he remained motionless, apparently lost in the thoughts passing through his mind. Finally, he roused himself, emptied the ashes from his burned-out pipe on the hearth, and then strode two or three times across the solid oak floor that rested directly upon the still more solid earth. Then, for the first time, he made a careful survey of his new acquisition, lighting a pine-knot and visiting the room on the other side of the passage. "It is not much of a place," he said aloud as he returned to the apartment he had just left, "but it will do, and to-morrow I shall begin my work." Then he opened his knapsack, took out several books and bundles of papers, and a map very much marked with pencil-tracings of routes and localities, which the maker had not thought it worth his while to indicate. The former he laid on the table, but the map he hung on the wall. For several minutes he continued to pace the room, his head bent upon his chest and his hands clasped behind his back. Every now and then he stopped to inspect the map, following out with his finger certain courses, and, to judge by the expression on his face, well pleased with the result of his examination. Then he threw two or three sticks of resinous pine on the fire, and, turning over the books on the table, appeared to be in search of a volume, which, however, he did not find. He seemed troubled at this result, and, again lighting a pine-knot, went out to the passage and looked carefully over the floor, and then out on the ground in front of the house. Still not discovering the object for which he was looking, he proceeded slowly down the path by which he had ascended the hill, holding his extemporized torch close to the earth and minutely inspecting every inch of the ground. He went as far as a large bowlder about half-way down the path, and then, still

unsuccessful in his search, he slowly retraced his steps. "It seems to be gone," he said, regretfully. "I would rather have lost every other book I own than that; and yet I do not see how it can so utterly have disappeared." He looked again through his knapsack, and around the room, but the book was nowhere to be seen. Reluctantly he abandoned his efforts, and, wrapping himself in a blanket, lay down in front of the fire, with his knapsack for a pillow, and was soon sound asleep.

He had slept probably two hours, when he was partially roused by the sound of many voices and the tramping of heavily-shod feet on the floor of the passage. Before he could, in his half-awakened state, collect his thoughts, the door of the room in which he slept was burst from its rotten hinges, and a dozen or more men with pine-knot torches and revolvers in their hands crowded into the apartment.

"It's no use, Jim," said the leader of the party; "we've got you this time sure, and your hour's come. Ef you've any message to leave, or any other little thing of that sort you'd like attended to, jist signify the same and I'll see to it, as certain as ef I was doin' it for a honest man."

"But, my friends," began the now fully awakened man to whom this comforting speech had been addressed—"my name—"

"Oh, yes! your name is jist anything you've a mind to call yourself, but in these parts you're known as Jim Bosler, the horse-thief, and you've got to swing inside o' five minutes! So, ef you want to pray, or tell where you hid the money you got from them Cañon fellows for Doc Willis's mare, why, you'd better begin at once, for the time's short."

"But," again attempted the owner, "I never stole a horse in my life, and my name is not Jim Bosler."

"That's not Jim, sure!" said a man with a torch in his hand, coming forward and holding it so that the light fell

full in the face of the intended victim, showing it to all in the room—"that's not Jim Bosler. I ought to know, for he was my pard for more'n a year, and would 'a bin yit, for all I know, ef he hadn't a-took a likin' to my mule."

"No!" exclaimed several others "that's not Jim."

"Not Jim—not Jim Bosler!" cried the leader, in astonishment. "Well, now, gentlemen, you ought to know, for *I* never seed the darned cuss in my life, although he's run off a dozen o' my best stock. But ef that's not Jim Bosler—and I must own there's doubts arisin' in my mind on that p'int—why, all I've got to say is, that we've made a all-fired flummux of the whole matter. This rope," he continued, taking a stout cord from his pocket, "ain't no manner o' use this time, and we've got to git back to Hellbender with our tails, so to speak, atween our legs. Ain't that so, gents?"

"Well, I know," said another of the party, "that that gent ain't no Jim Bosler. Jim, when I last seen him, was a short, thick-set man, with a broken nose and only one eye, and he had all-fired red hair, and was fifty year old, and he didn't talk any more like this 'ere gent than a poll-parrot talks like a primy donny. Leastwise that's the sort of a cuss Jim was last Saturday when I seen him at The Cañon. Now I axes you all ef this 'ere gent answers to that bill?"

"No!" cried several of the party with one voice.

"It is quite true, gentlemen," said John Tyscovus, whose face had all through the discussion, notwithstanding his peril, worn an amused expression—"it is quite true that I am not Jim Bosler. That individual left here several hours ago, after disposing of his property to me. Allow me to express my regret at your disappointment, and my satisfaction that you discovered your error before you had proceeded to extremities."

"So you've come to live among us?" said the chief

spokesman of the party. "I guess you've bought about the only thing in these parts as belonged to Jim Bosler by rights.—We've barked up the wrong tree this time, boys," he continued, addressing his followers; "Jim must 'a' got wind of this little business somehow, and took himself off in time to save his neck. I sort o' feared as much when I looked in the stable as we come up the butte, and seen the wagon and horses was gone. But, we're bound to ketch him some time or 'nother, unless he makes tracks out o' these parts quicker nor lightnin'. Come! don't let's keep the gentleman up any longer.—Perhaps we may meet ag'in some time," he went on, addressing Tyscovus, "'specially as you've come to stay; and, ef we do, we'll likely know one 'nother. My name's Brattle, and yours is—"

"Tyscovus," interrupted that gentleman.

"Well, that's the queerest name as ever I heard; is it Dutch?—sounds to me like Latin; but I ain't no jedge of your furrin languidges. However, a name's nothin', as Shakespeare says. You look like a trump, and we've done you some trouble, for which we're sorry. So, good-night, and 'may you live long and prosper!' as old Rip says.—Come, boys!" turning to the men as he spoke, "let's be off. The darned skunk's got away this time, darn his ugly picter!" Saying which, he and his party filed out of the room, leaving Tyscovus to meditate over his first night's experience on his estate, and the risk he had run of playing that most undesirable *rôle* of a vicarious victim. He listened for several minutes to the loud talking and laughing of the men as they descended the knoll. Then, after all was quiet, he again fell asleep.

CHAPTER II.

RETROSPECTIVE.—INTRODUCTIONS.

THE knoll, or "butte," as a hill was called by the settlers, upon which the cabin reared its unshapely mass, was in form very much like a truncated sugar-loaf. The flat surface on the top was probably a hundred feet in diameter, and in the center, as nearly as the eye could judge, stood the cabin, with nothing between it and the horizon on any side, except one giant pine-tree, which, springing from the side of the hill half-way up from its base, seemed as much out of place on the knoll as the knoll was out of place on the plain. There was no other vegetation, either on the flat top or steep and rocky sides, save a few scattered tufts of buffalo-grass, and here and there a stunted cactus-plant which grew in the crevices. The pine-tree (although wood was rather scarce in that locality) had hitherto managed to escape destruction. Several times Bosler had taken an axe and started out to cut it down for fire-wood; but each time he had experienced such a strong feeling of repugnance to the necessary physical exertion incident to the act, that he had returned to the house a colder but less exhausted man. This tree, rising as it did above the summit of the butte, with its limbs running out at right angles to the trunk, and one of them a convenient distance above the ground, would have admirably served the purpose of the vigilance committee in their public-spirited if unlawful intentions against Mr. Bosler, had they succeeded in lay-

ing hands on that sharp-witted individual. Hanging, in that part of the country, was effected after a very primitive method, when not performed under the auspices of the law; and it was seldom the case that this social institution had any say in the matter. A rope thrown over a limb, such as the one we have described, one end of which was fastened around the supposed criminal's neck, and the other held by the hands of half a dozen strong men pulling vigorously, answered every purpose; fulfilling all the requirements of the occasion, safely, quickly, and as pleasantly as was compatible with the object in view—"*Tuto, cito, et jucunde,*" as Hippocrates says, in describing the action of a favorite medicine. If the subject of the operation struggled and squirmed more than was considered altogether decorous, his suspended body was riddled with bullets, and his supposed agonies were thus still more rapidly hastened to an end.

A hundred yards or so to the east of the butte flowed Wildcat Creek on its way to Bobtail River, as the people called it, though it was said to have owed its name to a French hunter called Bobataille, who discovered it many years ago. The banks, though not high, were steep, and were bordered with cottonwood-trees and scrub-oak bushes, with here and there an American poplar and a sycamore. It was full of trout, not very different from those found in Eastern waters so far as their appearance went, but, from unfamiliarity with the wiles of man, altogether tamer in their ways, and hence not giving so high a degree of zest to the pleasure of the angler.

It was not much of a creek in ordinary times. It came down from the mountains only a few miles off to the north, and after falling rapidly in its course down the bottom of the cañon, sputtering and spuming like a veritable cataract, as it jumped from terrace to terrace and bowlder to bowlder, it suddenly became a respectable, easy-going,

and unemotional stream, as it flowed peacefully through the broad prairie covered with yellow buffalo-grass, till it reached Bobtail River.

But, for an hour or two after a thunder-storm, Wildcat Creek was throughout its whole course an angry torrent. Often it overflowed its bounds and flooded the meadows that lay between its western bank and Bobtail River. Many a cabin had been demolished, and many an ox, horse, and sheep been swept away, in the overwhelming waters. As Bobtail River generally felt the effects of the storms and thaws even more decidedly than Wildcat Creek, though not quite so suddenly, it was usually the case that, when a flood came, either from rain or from the melting of the winter's snows, the whole country around was one wide expanse of water. It was doubtless to avoid the inconvenience of being swept off by one of these floods that Jim Bosler had built his house high above the danger-line. Perhaps there were other reasons, that may be made apparent in the course of this history.

Hellbender was a flourishing town when the first settler drove in his stakes at Bill Dodd's Cañon; and it was still the more respectable so far as the tone of its society, the number of its churches, and the size and dignity of its dwelling-houses were concerned. Near it to the south and in a mountain-gorge was a deep lake, so deep in fact that it was said no one had yet sounded its bottom. It was fed entirely by the water from melted snow and ice which flowed into it all through the summer months. It was a cold, black, gloomy-looking lake, and the only inhabitant which had yet been discovered in it was a species of that remarkable batrachian to which naturalists give the name of *menobranchus*, and which is called by the common people hellbender. Hence the name of the town.

But, although deficient in social standing, Bill Dodd's Cañon, or "The Cañon," as it was now generally called,

was much the larger place of the two. It was peopled with men, women, and children from all parts of the world, civilized and uncivilized; and it was altogether a more enterprising and a busier settlement than the older town. People with very little morality, and many more with no morality at all, they were; but they were also vigorous, progressive, and desperate. These qualities were likely to be of more service to them in the region in which they lived than any founded on a high-toned regard for the proprieties of life. A consistent Christian, or Jew, or Buddhist, would have had little chance of a prolonged existence at The Cañon, or even of safety for his property. It was a "word and a blow" with the people there, and generally the blow came first, in the character of a bullet from a revolver.

Not a day had passed for over a month that some one had not been killed. It was getting to be monotonous; and one night at Crump's bar—a drinking-place of even worse repute than others at The Cañon—as quiet and as inoffensive a man as there was at the place, named Hallam, said, as he leaned against the counter: "Five minutes to twelve, and nary a fellow killed to-day. It was gittin' to be quite too usual, and hang me ef I ain't glad it's stopped."

"Perhaps you mean that for me," exclaimed our friend Jim Bosler, as he drew his six-shooter and leveled it at Hallam. "Thar's still three minutes and a half to spare to keep the thing a-goin', and I guess you'll do as well as any other cuss!" and, pulling the trigger, the victim gave a great bound into the air and fell to the floor with a bullet through his heart. Then Mr. Bosler looked around at the spectators in a savage sort of a way, still holding his smoking pistol in his hand ready for the next customer, but, finding no one to question the propriety of his act, he stalked out of the room, whistling a merry air, and left the occupants to pick up the dead. This was his eleventh man since he

had been in those parts. It might have been said of him, as of a distinguished French murderer, that "he ought to have had a cemetery of his own."

Hallam, however, had friends, and they intimated to Mr. Bosler their disapproval of his summary proceedings, and their intention to shoot him on sight if he staid twenty-four hours longer at The Cañon. They desired to give him a chance for his life, for in his way he was at times a useful man. It was only when he broke through the bounds of what they regarded as the customs of good society that they felt aggrieved, and this he always did when he had imbibed too freely of the "rot-gut" whisky that formed the staple beverage of the inhabitants. He was therefore advised that it would be prudent for him to confine himself in future to his legitimate business of horse-stealing, provided he restricted his operations to the comparatively wealthy citizens of Hellbender, and brought the animals to The Cañon for sale at half their value. Six anonymous letters informed him that he must depart at once, and betake himself to his ranch at Wildcat Creek, under penalty, in case of refusal to take the hint—that at that particular moment his room was more desirable than his company—of more effectual measures being adopted.

Mr. Bosler, influenced by the state of his emotions, which at that time were somewhat disturbed through reflections upon the narrow-minded policy of his enemies, and the continued use of whisky, had declared with much emphasis that he would "knock hell out of any skunk" that interfered with his right of domicile, and make as many graves necessary as Hallam had friends before he would stir an inch! But after much earnest thought, to which, as he had run through his debauch, abstinence from his accustomed stimulus materially contributed, and a full consideration of the large odds against him if things went much further, he very wisely concluded to kick the mud of Bill

Dodd's Cañon from his boots, and to seek the society of his wife and daughter at the butte. In the abstract, he had very little regard for the sanctity of human life; but when his own skin was in danger, and his brain was not befuddled with the fumes of alcohol, his mental processes were affected with a degree of accuracy and force that generally led him to the safest if not the most righteous conclusions. In the present instance the communications he had received went to the point with a directness that left nothing to be desired, and the advice they contained was couched in language that, if not elegant, was a model of conciseness and perspicuity. The writers evidently "meant business." So, with the remark to his "pards" that if he could "find the low-flung cusses as writ them letters, kingdom-come would have an increase in its population," he set out for his place of banishment with mingled feelings of sorrow and anger.

His wife and daughter were already there, so that very little change in the existing arrangements was necessary to fit it for the occupancy of the husband and father. His daughter, a girl of about seventeen years of age, slept in one of the "pens," which at the same time was kitchen and eating-room, while Mr. Bosler and his wife occupied the other, which was also the family sitting-room when the time for sociability arrived, or when visitors made their appearance. In winter the passage was boarded up at both ends, and thus a kind of anteroom to the other apartments was furnished, and at the same time the cold blasts of air that swept down from the mountains and up from the prairie were, to some extent, impeded in their entrance to the inhabited parts of the house.

The family had been reunited about a month, when one afternoon—it was in the early part of September, and the days were hot—Mr. Bosler, who was seated in his own room, with his feet on the table before him, on which there

was also a bottle of whisky, his chair tilted back on its hind-legs, and his face expressing a degree of inward satisfaction that a glass or two of alcoholic liquor always developed in him, happened to look out of the one window of the apartment, and saw coming along the road from Hellbender a man toiling wearily and carrying a large knapsack on his shoulders. The heat of the sun's rays was intense, the road was dusty, and every now and then the traveler stopped and rested his load on a long cane that he carried. Wayfarers were not common in that part of the country, and Mr. Bosler watched the man with interest as he gradually came nearer to the butte. "Ef he only had a hoss, now," he said to himself, "dang me ef I wouldn't go for it!" The knowledge that the individual did not possess one of these useful animals on which Mr. Bosler could lay his predatory hands appeared to have a somewhat dispiriting influence. At any rate, something urged him to place the mouth of the bottle near by in contact with his lips, and he did not remove it till several gurgling sounds occurring, showed that no inconsiderable portion of the contents had gone down his throat. "Hello!" he continued, aloud, as he returned to the window, "he's a-comin' to the butte as sure as a gun! A parson, too, to jedge by the cut of his toggery, or I'm a liar. Good Lord! Thar's work enough for him in these parts, ef that's what he's lookin' for."

The man had turned off from the main road and was painfully climbing the path that led to Jim Bosler's cabin, while this gentleman anxiously watched him from his commanding point of observation. It was a steep hill the traveler had to surmount, and the path went almost perpendicularly up its side. There was a wagon-road that he might have taken, but it was much longer, winding as it did around the knoll, till, by its spiral course, it eventually reached the top. Evidently he preferred the quick and severe exertion of the shorter road.

"He's got jist about as much as he can stagger under," resumed Mr. Bosler as he continued to watch the climber. "Here, Moll!" to his wife, who was in the passage engaged at the wash-tub—"here's the fellow you've bin a-wishin' for—a parson to do your prayin' for you; come and take a look at him."

Thus addressed, Mrs. Bosler ceased her work, approached the window, and, with her husband, studied the appearance of the stranger who was gradually nearing the house. She was a woman of apparently about thirty-five years of age, and, so far as facial characteristics went, the very opposite of the head of the family; her eyes and hair being of the most intense black hue, while his hair was of a pale, washed-out, carroty tint, and his one eye of that nondescript color, neither gray, blue, nor green, so common with members of the Scandinavian race. Her eyes were large, full, and expressive of a certain kind of cheerful sadness, which sets so well on some women. His one was small, ferretty, blood-shot, and inclined to twinkle when the owner's breast was more than usually disturbed either with pleasant or painful emotions. She had been engaged in the performance of the laundry-work of the family, it being Monday, a day sacred to that duty through the force of tradition. Her arms were bare, and her petticoat was tucked up behind so as to protect it as much as possible from the contaminating influence of the soap-suds. She placed one arm akimbo, and rested the other lovingly on her husband's shoulders. Evidently they were on very good terms with each other.

The traveler made his way with difficulty, occasionally stumbling over some unobserved obstacle, and once or twice stopping in his ascent to turn and take a rapid survey of the prairie through which Wildcat Creek and Bobtail River ran. Far off to the north were several detached, snow-capped peaks of the Sierra Madre, lit up with many

shades of red, purple, and yellow, as the rays of the sun fell upon them; while to the east were high table-lands, cut up by numerous cañons, one of which, having been discovered and occupied by Bill Dodd, had been named after that adventurer.

"I don't think he's a preacher," said Mrs. Bosler, after a hurried but searching scrutiny of the traveler; "he looks more like a peddler, to my mind, and that's his pack on his shoulders."

"Preacher or peddler, it's all one. He's comin' here."

"That's true," replied the woman. "Don't you think, Jim, you mought go down and give him a little h'ist up the hill? It's steep, and he looks awful tired."

"Now, look here, Moll Bosler, did you ever know me do such a all-fired soft thing as that? Ef you want to help him so darned bad you can jist do it yourself!"

"So I will, Jim, and Lal with me—Come, daughter," she continued, opening the door and calling across the passage into the other room. "Thar's a stranger comin' up the butte. Let's go down and give him a lift. Prehaps he's a peddler, and then you can get them stockin's you was wantin'."

The girl thus addressed was singing at the top of her voice:

"It's a bargain, a bargain for you, young man,
It's a bargain, a bargain for you, young man;
You promised for to marry me six months and more ago:
I'll keep you to your promise, and I'll never let you go."

"Don't you hear me, Lal?" exclaimed Mrs. Bosler, in louder and shriller tones, as the verse was repeated. "Come out here at once! Ef you want them stockin's, now's your time."

Before the words were out of the woman's mouth the singing ceased, and an untidy and scantily clad girl came out into the passage. Her hair was hanging in long, black,

frowsy masses over her naked shoulders, and her face did not exhibit any obvious indications of a recent acquaintance with soap and water. A single garment, much the worse for dirt and wear, and rather shorter at both ends than was altogether proper, covered a portion of her body; her feet were bare: certainly she wanted stockings as well as other articles of female apparel. Still, she was not a bad-looking girl, in spite of the disadvantages in the way of cleanliness and adornment under which she labored. Her black eyes, with their intelligent and thoughtful though good-natured expression, her well-formed and white teeth which she liberally displayed when she laughed, and her shapely mouth—ample but not overlarge—made altogether an *ensemble* that was capable of exciting both admiration and interest in most of those who might take the trouble to study her face. In some respects she resembled her mother, but she had not a single feature of her father's in her whole physical organization. To look at the two, no one would have supposed that they bore even the most distant relationship to each other, much less that they were father and daughter. She was rather above than below the medium height, was well and strongly put together, was muscular without being bony, and graceful in her movements, without perhaps possessing that suppleness of motion resulting from slenderness. Her hands and feet, though giving evidence of hard usage, were nevertheless small and well made. Clearly, she was rough and uncouth in mind and body. She had grown up like a garden-weed, untutored and uncared for. Yes, even worse; for the good points that Nature had put into her had not even been allowed to develop after their own way, but had been dwarfed and twisted and deformed, and crowded out of place, by the circumstances under which she had lived as a child and expanded into womanhood.

"What air you doin', Lal, that you can't hear when

you're spoken to?" said her mother, with some degree of asperity in her voice. "Here have I bin a-callin' to you, and you go on singin' as ef you had nothin' to do all day but screech."

"Well, mother," answered the girl, "I was cleanin' them fish I ketched this mornin', and singin' a song I learnt over at The Cañon last Sunday. Thar ain't no harm in singin', is thar?"

"Harm or no harm ain't no matter now; don't you see thar's a man comin' up the butte? He's give out with his load, and you and me's got to go down and help him to lift it. Prehaps he's got things to sell, and ef we help him we'll git 'em cheap."

"A strange man, and me without no frock and nothin'! Jist wait, mam, till I tidy up a bit."

"Now, Lal Bosler, ef you've got to fix up and make yourself decent, you can jist go back to your singin' and fish-cleanin', and I'll do the job myself. No, you needn't bother yourself," as the girl snatched up a dilapidated shawl and threw it over her shoulders. "I'll do it myself. I've lifted heavier things nor that pack in my time, and I kin do it ag'in, I guess. Go back to your fish-cleanin' and your screechin', and leave the man to me."

"All right, mam," said the girl, good-humoredly; "it ain't much clothes as I've got, but I like to put some of 'em on when strangers is about, 'specially if they're men. I'll be all fixed by the time you're here ag'in. You mought ask him about the stockin's afore you brings him up." And with these words she hurried back to her room, and Mrs. Bosler descended the hill with the laudable purpose of helping the unexpected stranger.

Again he had stopped, and was looking long and searchingly around the landscape, as if trying to discover some particular mark of identification, shading his eyes with his hands as he turned toward the west, where the sun lay low

in the sky, sending horizontal beams into his face. Finally, he appeared to be satisfied with the inspection he had made of the surrounding country; for a smile lit up his face, and he turned to resume his toilsome journey up the hill. Suddenly, however, ere he had taken half a dozen steps, a troubled expression passed over his countenance, and, throwing his pack on the ground, he sprang with the strength and agility of an athlete to the top of a large bowlder near by, and standing up at his full height again surveyed the country around him.

He was apparently about thirty years of age. In figure he was tall and slim, but there was no element of weakness in his straight and supple body, every muscle of which was strong and well developed, and upon which there did not appear to be an ounce of fat. The long coat, not unlike a clerical cassock, that he wore, was, probably on account of the heat, unbuttoned, and the strong prairie-wind blew the skirts back so that the full proportions of his form could be seen as it stood out in bold relief against the western sky, with not another object on the same plane, save the tall, gaunt pine-tree with its horizontal limbs.

His face like the rest of him was thin—so thin, in fact, that it would have almost warranted the designation of "hatchet-shaped." And yet it was by no means an ungraceful face. The forehead was high and broad, neither prominent nor receding, but straight, like that of a Greek. His dark eyes, shaded by well-defined but not exaggerated eyebrows, were set somewhat deeply in his head, but their expression, instead of losing in force thereby, as is the case with many, seemed to gain in vigor and intensity.

They were wonderful eyes!—eyes which, when once seen, were not likely to be soon forgotten. They were piercing, inquiring, analyzing eyes, before which most others that might attempt to stem their gaze would probably retreat in confusion; and yet it was evident that, when the mood

was on him, no one could put more kindness and sympathy and love into eyes than could the man who stood bare-headed on the rock, his auburn hair ruffled by the sirocco-like wind that swept over the prairie, and with a half-anxious, half-despairing expression on his countenance. They were not the twinkling, snapping eyes which dark-skinned people sometimes possess, which are always disagreeable, and which never express a profound emotion of any kind as if it were really felt. He was of a fair-skinned race, and yet his eyes were almost black. At times—perhaps it was when some earnest but tender emotion swayed him—their color changed to a hazel tint, and they appeared to be less deeply set in their orbits. Whatever it was that influenced them, it seemed then that not only their expression but even their anatomical characteristics were altered. They appeared, indeed, to be endowed with a life of their own, acting independently of, but in unison with, the force in the brain behind them.

But, if his eyes expressed individuality, his mouth was a still more characteristic feature of a face in which there was nothing mean or commonplace. There was no mustache to hide the splendid teeth, or the sharply limned contours of the thin but not meager lips, which, while expressing refinement and nobility of mental organization, showed by a certain firmness of outline the strength of purpose and of will that actuated the man to whom they belonged. Decision, energy, resoluteness, and courage were never more markedly exhibited, and these traits were intensified by the large Roman nose that dominated every feature of his countenance. The absence of all vestige of beard allowed the clear, olive complexion to be seen, while at the same time it revealed the hollowness of his cheeks and the massive, clear-cut form of his chin.

Altogether it was not a face that many persons would have called handsome. It was too far removed from all

vulgar standards for that; but few would have failed to see that it was the face of a man to be feared or loved as occasion required, and of one who, when he chose, could be very dangerous to his enemies and very tender to his friends.

He continued to stand on the bowlder for several minutes, scanning the land around him. Then he took a little note-book from his pocket and began to read from it, stopping every now and then to look around him, as though endeavoring to verify its statements.

"It must be the place," he said. "The points of identification are too many for there to be much chance of an error being committed, and yet there are several features here in the description that I do not find in the landscape. A blunder now might be irretrievable. 'A creek flowing toward the south,' " he continued, after a moment's pause, and reading from his note-book. "'A conical hill, flattened on the top.' On its western slope a single pine-tree near the summit.' So far so good, but the remainder of the description does not agree with the facts. 'From a large bowlder to the left of the path that leads to the summit, and in a southwest direction on a line with a snow-capped mountain-peak, three dead trees in a row and at right angles to the line of vision, will be seen. These trees are about a mile from the knoll, and distant from each other about ten feet.' Well! Here is the bowlder—there is no other—there is the mountain-peak covered with snow, but where are the trees? Besides, on this hill there is a log-cabin, whereas nothing is said here of any such structure. However, three years have elapsed since this was written. The trees may have been cut down, and the cabin built in that time. Yes, it must be the same. For two days I have had this hill in sight, and, when I came to the path leading to the top, I turned into it as automatically as though I were going to my own home in Warsaw."

For a moment longer he stood as though still uncertain. Then his countenance changed as if some sudden inspiration actuated him; he descended from the rock, took up his pack, and with a cheerful smile upon his face began again to climb the hill. He raised his eyes toward the goal he was attempting to reach, now scarcely a hundred feet distant, and encountered those of Mrs. Bosler staring at him with an inquiring but not an unkind expression.

CHAPTER III.

RETROSPECTIVE.—A PURCHASE.

"I THOUGHT as how you was tired," said that lady, smiling, "and as you 'peared to be comin' our way, I says to Lal—Lal's my daughter, you know—says I, 'Let's go down and help the stranger up the butte.' But she's sich a high-sailin' gal that nothin' would do but she must fix up; as ef what's good enough for me an' her father ain't good enough for any one else. Now I knowed ef you had to wait for her to git through with her washin's and combin's and sich like, you'd have to h'ist that pack up the butte all by yerself, and it's a good smart pull yit afore you git to the top."

"Many thanks, madam, for your consideration," said Tyscovus, raising his hat, "but I am not at all tired, and I can very easily carry my knapsack the short distance that remains. No!" he continued, as she made a motion to relieve him of his load, "I really can not allow you to carry so heavy a burden—heavy, that is, for a woman, though it is nothing for me."

"Well, I'm used to liftin' heavier hefts nor that, but—" and she stopped an instant to look at him attentively, "you're a furriner of some sort, for, though you speak jist like one from the States, it's easy to see it's not your own languidge you're talkin'. I could talk as good as any one onst, and I kin now when I try, for I used to teach school in Indiany afore I was married. But twenty years livin'

with Jim and sich like around has brought me down a peg or two, I tell you. Not as he's bad to me," she hastened to add, as if fearing that her words might be misconstrued, "but he's not much on grammar and other larnin', and I kind o' fell into his ways. It's a deal easier. As for Lal, she never knowed no better, but sometimes I'm right smart 'shamed o' her and me too. Now give me the pack, and you'll git all the sooner to the top whar you kin rest yerself as long as you likes."

"No, not on any account," replied Tyscovus, smiling, for though fatigued he was amused at the woman's loquacity; "I should be ashamed of myself if I allowed a woman to do such a thing for me so long as I can do it myself. But there is something you *can* do for me, and then I shall be very much obliged to you. Tell me, were there ever three dead trees over in that direction, between us and the mountain yonder?"

"Well, there was, till about a week ago, and then some sk—person who'd nothin' better to do chopped 'em down."

"You are quite sure?"

"Jist as sure as shootin'! Jim—that's my man—and Lal will tell you the same thing."

"And that is your house on the top of the hill?"

"Yes, sir! That ranch is mine, or rather it's Jim's."

"May I ask how long it has been there?"

"Law! you may ask anything you like. I guess it's bin thar about three year."

"Thanks! Now let us go on."

Mrs. Bosler led the way, Tyscovus following closely behind her.

"Mought I ask," she said, "what mought your country be?"

"Poland," he answered, as he strode on after her.

"Poland! Yes, I've heard tell of it long ago; but you're the first man, or woman either for that, as ever I seen from

Poland." Then, after another moment's silence, "How long now have you bin in the States?"

"About six months."

"Six months, and talkin' English like that!"

"Oh! I studied English at home; and then, besides, my mother was an American; and again, I have lived many years in England."

"Married?" she resumed, after taking half a dozen more steps.

"No."

"Preacher?"

"No."

"Peddler?"

"No."

"Then," she continued, stopping and turning around to face him, "what air you?"

"Nothing but a man."

"I thought all the Polanders was counts or sich like."

"When I am at home I am a count, but here I am plain John Tyscovus."

"John Tys— Tys— what did you say?"

"John Tyscovus, and very anxious to get to the top of this hill," he answered, smiling.

"I thought you'd be tired afore you got thar. John Tyscovus! Well, of all the names I ever heard tell on or come across, that beats the lot!"

Another half a dozen steps.

"Have you come here to stay?"

"That I do not know yet. It depends on how you treat me."

"How we treat you! Why, you don't want to stay with us, do you?"

"Not exactly. I shall probably ask your husband to sell the place to me. I like the situation, and would be de-

lighted to own it. What do you say? Will you help me to persuade him to let me have it?"

"Oh, thar won't be no trouble about that! All you've got to do is to give him his price, and the ranch's your'n. And I do hope you'll git it, and then may be Jim'll leave these parts, and things'll be better with us than they air now."

"What do you mean? Do not things go well with you now?"

"No," she answered, stopping again and looking around her, "no; thar's Lal—she gits no bringin' up and no schoolin', though I mought have given her both if I'd had half a chance; but I've jist let her go her own way, mostly because I didn't have no chance. She's learnt herself to read and write, and cipher a bit. She's a good gal, and never gives me no trouble except when she gits mad, and then she raises bloody Moses, I tell you! Ef I could git her away out of these parts to somewhar whar there was schools and women, it would be all the better for her and Jim and me. Oh, yes! I'll help you all I kin to git the place. But here we air," as she stepped on the level ground on which the cabin stood—"and here's Jim too."

"Glad to see you, stranger!" exclaimed Mr. Bosler, coming forward with outstretched hands. "Tough work climbin' this butte, I tell you! You ought to 'a' gone round by the wagon-road. Howsomever, this one's shorter, and that's what you wanted, I guess. You ain't no preacher nor peddler neither," he continued, scrutinizing his visitor from head to foot; "you're a perspecter, that's what you air. Howsomever, that's all right. Thar's plenty of 'em about here, but blow me if I ever seen one jist like you! My name's Bosler—what mought yours be?"

"John Tyscovus."

"Well, every man has a right, I guess, to his own name, and as many on 'em as he likes too. But you've got one as

no fellow's likely to take away from you, and thar ain't none o' your kin in these parts, neither. Walk in and take somethin'.—Here, Lal," he continued, as he and his visitor reached the house, "bring a cup or somethin' fit to drink out of.—Confound the gal! she ain't got through her fixin' yit. Never mind, though! Come in and take things as they air."

With these words, and with an exuberance of manner indicative of a hospitable feeling which it must be confessed did not often reign in Mr. Bosler's breast, he ushered Tyscovus into the chief room of the cabin.

"Now, sir!" he resumed, wiping with his coat-sleeve the mouth of the bottle to which reference has already been made—"here's somethin' as'll take the tire out of you better nor all the cheers and beds atween this and Denver. It's prime, I tell you, and after a long tramp, or a wet ride, goes right to the heart as straight as a sand-hill crane to its nest. Come, sir! don't be bashful; I'm not much for fine talk, but dang me if I don't like to do the squar' thing by a stranger!"

Not to appear wanting in appreciation of Mr. Bosler's good-fellowship, Tyscovus put the bottle to his lips and swallowed a few drops of the burning liquor. He had a strong head and a strong stomach, but the infinitesimal quantity he took almost turned both. He managed, however, to conceal his sensations, and thanking his entertainer returned him the bottle.

"Well," said the latter, "I'd about made up my mind that I'd drunk enough for to-day, but hang me ef I kin ever let this 'ere bottle go out o' my hands without makin' acquaintance agin with what's inside of it. Thar, now!" he continued after the prolonged contact between his mouth and that of the bottle had come to an end, "ef I take any more to-night you may call me a liar, and when Jim Bosler says that he means it sure. Take a cheer and make

yourself at home. We ain't much rigged up here, but what we've got is your'n for to-night, anyway."

"Thanks," said Tyscovus; "you are very kind. But I have come on a little business, Mr. Bosler, and with your leave I will now proceed to lay it before you."

At these words, Mr. Bosler's expression became one of intense curiosity, not unmingled with one of alarm. He looked fixedly at Tyscovus for half a minute, during which neither spoke a syllable. Then he reached with his right hand to somewhere about the small of his back, and brought forward a revolver, which he laid on the table before him, all the time keeping his eyes fixed on his companion's face. "It may be all right stranger," he said, when he had completed this movement; "you don't look like a sheriff, or any of that kind o' cuss, but when a man says 'business' to me, specially when that man's unbeknown to me, it's not in human natur' to let him take the first lick. You see it mought be darned onconvenient; and though thar ain't likely no needcessity for this little friend bein' one of our party, thar ain't nothin' like bein' ready for anything as mought turn up. You see, I've bin thar afore!"

Tyscovus smiled.

"You are all wrong, my friend," he said; "my business is of the most peaceful character. I like the situation of your house, and I want to buy it."

"You want to buy this ere ranch?"

"Yes, if you are willing to sell it. If not, I must look elsewhere."

"And what in the devil do you want this pertic'lar ranch for? It ain't such a all-fired fine place as to suit one o' your kind."

Tyscovus judged that it would be better not to appear too anxious to strike the bargain.

"Well, I like the situation—I am also fond of fresh air;

but I see the house would require a good deal of work on it to make it suit me, so we will say nothing about the matter now. I shall be around here for some time yet, and if you change your mind let me know, and perhaps we can then come to terms."

"Who said I didn't want to sell it? You see, Mr.—dang me ef I kin git your name!—I'm sort o' tired o' these parts, and so is my wife and Lal. The women ain't got no society here, and I've bin thinkin' for a year and longer of going to a higher-toned place, whar the gal could git some schoolin'. Now how much will you plank down in good hard cash for the house, the whole butte, and ten acres of prairie? Say the word, and ef we agree, the ranch's your'n, and off we go to-night!"

"I have no idea of the value of such a piece of property; you must fix your own price."

"Well, wait a minute till I go and talk to the old woman and Lal," said Mr. Bosler, moving toward the door. "Women in general don't know much, and a man as is always runnin' to his wife to tell him what to do is poor shucks, I think. But 'for this occasion only,' as they puts it on the theatre-bills, they knows more'n me. Ef it war a hoss or a mule, I'd tell you to a dollar what it's worth, but when it comes to houses and buttes, blow me ef I ain't jist like a grizzly in a drug-store—a darned sight more apt to git the wrong thing than the right one."

He left the room with a shuffling gait, not so much the result of intoxication—for he had not yet taken enough whisky that day to disturb his mental or moral equilibrium—as of the down-at-the-heel carpet slippers that he wore, and that flopped unpleasantly on the floor with every step he took.

As soon as he was gone, Tyscovus went to the window and looked out over the country, which could be seen at that elevation for many miles in all directions. The sun

was just sinking behind the highlands in the west, but the atmosphere was still full of light, and he could see distinctly all the striking features of the landscape. The long road by which he had come lay on the prairie like a great yellow snake stretched out at full length. Wildcat Creek flowed peacefully at the foot of the butte, the snow-capped peak was far off in the distance, still lit up with the rays of the sun. Yes, it was the spot he was seeking; of that there could be no doubt. The thought carried him back to his own land far off in the East, and to the strange events that had brought him to where he now stood. By what influence had he been guided? What was to be the end of it all? Why not now confess himself the ass his father had once called him, and go back to his own princely home in Warsaw? Something a little like indecision swayed him, but it was only the doubt that every reasoning mind at times experiences in the face of difficult questions that require to be decided at once, and in regard to which positive information is scant. He stood and looked, deeply, awfully impressed with the sense of grandeur that all before him excited. He recalled how, not many years before, he had surveyed from a mountain-height another scene as vast, as grand as this that now lay at his feet. But there all was ice and snow and desolation, and he was in the company of felons, with chains upon his limbs, and brutal masters to strike him with whips if he spoke, or faltered in the work set for him to do. Here, how different! All nature seemed alive—the grass was growing, the water flowing, the air was warm and genial, and, as he drew it into his lungs, it seemed to reach with its enlivening influence the remotest nerves of his body. And, above all, he was free—free to go or stay, with no one to question his right or power. No not that—not free! For is not the tyranny of an irresistible impulse more of a despotism than the iron heel of the autocrat as shown through his

soldiers and convict-drivers? There was no escape. He must go on, and this place, the refuge where his work was to be done, must become his.

But what if the price should be beyond his present means? He had money in plenty in the bank at Denver, but had only brought five hundred dollars with him, and it was scarcely to be expected that the owner would take the check of an unknown person for any sum above this that might be required. "Besides," he said to himself, as he again sat down in his chair by the table, "it would be altogether within the probabilities for that man, who is evidently not troubled with scruples when he wishes to do anything out of the way, and whose fears were just now excited by the consciousness that he deserved to feel the weight of the law, to attempt to take the small sum I have, or even to murder me. Still, it would trouble him a little, I think, so long as I have this weapon at hand," taking, as the words passed through his mind, a short, thin dagger from a sheath in the right side of his trousers, and then instantly returning it to its place of concealment. "He does not know our Siberian way of carrying such a thing, or that I had my hand on it ready to plunge it into his heart if he had raised his pistol an inch from the table. I thought at one time that I should kill him the very next instant. Evidently, however, he has no intention at present of doing me harm. He is apparently as anxious to sell his 'ranch,' as he calls it, as I am to buy it."

In the mean time Bosler had repaired to the other room, and in a few brief but effective words had explained the situation to his wife and daughter.

"You see," he said, sitting down on an inverted washtub, while the two women, stopping their work, listened attentively to what he had to say—"you see he's a perspecter, sartain sure. He's got some notion of gold and silver bein' about here, and he likes the lay o' this ranch.

Prehaps he's come out here as a agent for some o' them rich Eastern fellows as has got more spondulix than they knows what to do with. But, Lord bless you! there ain't no gold nor silver here nor anywheres near here. These parts has bin gone over and over by them scientific chaps as thinks they knows more'n other fellows, and not a nugget nor a lead did they git. Howsomever it ain't none of our business to tell him that. He'll find it out quick enough for himself, I'll bet. Now what do you say, old woman—and what do you say, Lal?"

"Well, for my part, Jim, I'd sell it right away and be done with it," said Mrs. Bosler, emphatically. "These parts ain't good for you, and I think you'd better be makin' tracks for another settlement. Thar's a feelin' agin you here and none of us ain't safe, not even Lal and me. Thar's no tellin' what them Hellbender sneaks might do any night while we're here in our beds, and it ain't safe, as you knows, Jim, for you to go out on the road, even for a mile or two."

"That's jist as true as anything you ever said in your life, Moll," said Mr. Bosler, slapping his knee with his big red hand, on which there were several scars, healed and unhealed—"jist as true as gospil, and this here letter, which I picked up 'bout a hour ago at the foot of the butte, makes it a darn sight truer—that is, in course, ef I make it out right. Here you take it, Moll, and read it out to me and Lal, and we'll see ef I've got the c'rect understandin' of it."

Mrs. Bosler took from his extended hand a soiled and crumpled piece of paper that her husband had abstracted from the breast-pocket of his coat, and read as follows:

"MR. JIM BOSLER:

"The comite will be down on you to-night as certain as shootin'! Git away as soon as you kin, and don't lose no time nether!

"From a trew Friend."

Up to this time Lal had taken no part in the conversation. This young woman had finally succeeded in making herself look "decent." She had combed and brushed her hair, put on a frock and shoes and stockings, and had thereby decidedly improved her personal appearance. A red ribbon that she had bound around her head held her glossy black hair back from her forehead, and gave an air of finish to her toilet, which was more effective, through its simplicity and the striking contrast it afforded, than would have been a more elaborate garniture. Now that she had washed her face, it was seen also that she had a clear, healthy complexion that not even exposure to sun and wind and rain and dirt had served to impair. Altogether, Lal Bosler could have held her own, so far as natural good looks were concerned, with many a more artistically-dressed girl.

The effect produced upon the two women by the reading of the anonymous letter was very different in each.

Mrs. Bosler became as pale as death and trembled with fear and excitement; while Lal, on the contrary, flushed with anger and defiance.

"I wouldn't budge a step!" she exclaimed, indignantly, her black eyes flashing with the emotion she felt, and her voice trembling. "We've rifles and pistols here, and we knows how to use 'em, too! Let 'em come ef they dar'! We never did 'em no harm, did we, father? Why do they want to drive us away, and may be even kill us?"

"Well, as to harm, Lal, that's altogether a matter of opinion, I guess," said Mr. Bosler, reflectively, and with becoming modesty. "People, you see, don't always look at what a fellow does jist as they orter. Now, hosses and mules is things, to my notion, that no man has a right to call his'n ef another fellow kin git 'em. It isn't likely as God Almighty was goin' to make hosses and mules for the perticler use of any cuss in perticler, is it? Well, sich

bein' the case," he continued, after a pause, as if he really expected a negative answer, during which he looked around the room as though addressing a large audience—"sich bein' the case, it stands to reason that the smartest fellow's goin' to git the most stock in the long run. Now I've had pretty good luck as things go, and that's made 'em jealous o' me on that score. Lucky men is always bin down on by them as is jealous and onlucky. Them's the two worst things a man can be—jealous and onlucky—and there ain't nothin' they won't stop at when they feels them feelin's. That's the whole story. Prehaps I've bin a leetle too free with my six-shooter when I had too much whisky, but it ain't that as riles 'em and sets 'em on to formin' committees ag'in me. It's the hosses and mules as does it, Lal. That's what it is."

Mr. Bosler spoke these words in a tone of injured innocence that was not without its effect on the girl. She evidently regarded his view of the matter as one to be upheld by the whole Bosler family.

"Then stay and fight it out," she said; "don't sell the place till to-morrow, anyhow, and ef they come to-night the stranger'll give us a hand; and, from what I seen of him as he come up the hill, he'd be worth a dozen sich men as them in Hellbender in a fight. Don't let's run away because o' them skunks as comes in the night and daren't face you in the sunlight."

"No, no, Lal!" exclaimed Mrs. Bosler, who since she had read the note had not ceased to exhibit the most intense apprehensions, and who probably had a fuller conception of Mr. Bosler's misdoings than had her daughter—"no, no, we can't run no sich resks. Why, there'll be twenty on 'em ef there'll be one, and all on 'em with six-shooters. What chance would we have with a crowd like that stealin' up at night and murderin' us all afore we ask God to forgive us our sins?—No, Jim, sell the place at onst,

and let's leave right away; we ain't got much to carry, and the cart'll take us all over to The Cañon in two hours."

"You see, Lal," said Mr. Bosler, rising from the inverted wash-tub and pacing the room as he warmed with his subject, though not apparently noticing his wife's appeal—"what you say goes straight to my heart. I'd like to stay and fight it out onst for all with the cowardly cusses as begrudges a man a livin' for himself and family, and I'll bet a hundred dollars to ten cents, and give you back your money ef you loses, that more'n one on 'em wouldn't git off this butte with his own legs. I ain't no steer to lay down and let 'em kick *me*. But you see, my gal, the odds is too much ag'in us. Ef I was alone, I'd rig up the old place into a reg'lar block-house, and I guess I could stand it as long as they could. But, with you and your mam to see to, I guess we'd better slide along. May be I've bin a hard sort of a man in my time, but whenever I knowed what I was doin' I've always stood by you and the old woman, and done the best I knowed how. Whenever it's bin different, it's bin when I've had more whisky than was good for me. There's one thing I've done that I'm bound to ondo ef I have to kill the cuss as made me do it, and then I guess I'm squar with the world. But here's a chance to sell the ranch jist as we've got to leave it, anyhow. That's what I calls luck, and darned good luck too. Still, I won't deny that what you say, Lal, makes me feel prouder nor a turkey-cock that I'm the father of a gal with spunk and sperit enough to shame many a one o' them Hellbender cusses as thinks they're better nor other folks. The next time I goes on a tramp, blow me ef I don't take you along! You'll make the best pard as ever I had."

"You're right, Jim," said Mrs. Bosler, her face showing the joy she was experiencing at her husband's decision. "Sell the place, and let's go at onst. While you settle the thing with the stranger, I'll hitch up the hosses, and we'll

be at The Cañon afore its much more'n dark. And it's full moon to-night, too."

"Hold on, Moll!" interrupted Mr. Bosler; "don't rattle on quite so fast. I guess we've got to go, but there's strong reasons why we can't jist now drive in our stakes at The Cañon. You see things is not workin' exactly right for me over thar. They've a sort of a spite ag'in me—gon darn 'em, for a set o' skulkin' cusses!—and it mought be a leetle resky for us to go thar jist at this pi'nt o' time. We can go back here about five miles whar them New York fellows had a camp when they was perspecterin' for gold. Thar's a right smart cabin thar, and no one near to say 'no' to us. You and Lal kin stay thar for a few days, and I'll jist look round at The Cañon and see that it's all right and safe.—You see, Moll," he continued, drawing his wife aside and talking in a whisper, "Luke Kittle's over thar now, and it wouldn't do for him and me to meet. Now"—speaking aloud—"how much ought I to get for this ranch? That's what I want to know."

"A thousand dollars," said Lal, impetuously. "It's worth that ef it's worth a cent."

"A thousand fiddlesticks!" exclaimed her father, with a sarcastic laugh. "It's scarcely worth a thousand cents. How much is a thousand cents, Lal?"

"Ten dollars," answered the girl after a moment's reflection.

"Well, ef your mam don't see no objection, I perpose I fix the valley o' this ranch at two hundred dollars, cash down. You see the butte and the prairie below goes with it."

"It's enough, I suppose," said Lal, still with asperity; "but it makes my blood bile to think o' runnin' away from a lot o' cowardly villins and stealin' off in the night as ef we was thieves."

"That's it, Lal, you've hit it exactly," exclaimed her father—"not that you and your mam is to be so called,

though you've stood by the old man like his best trumps every time; but that's what they call me, and jist because I've made a honest livin' for my family by pickin' up a hoss or two at times, and mayhap a mule. But, as for oxes and sheep, I never took one in all my born life; for I always said to myself, said I, that would be takin' the meat out o' some one's mouth, and Jim Bosler ain't the man to do that. Ef he is, you may call me a liar. And as to things as really belonged to a man, sich as personal property as they calls it, I'm a head and shoulders above takin' sich like. Why, thar's lots o' fellows around here, and some on 'em on the committee too, as would 'a' made short work o' that ere stranger sittin' in thar, and 'a' gone through his pockets as quick as a prairie-dog through a meal-bag. But that's not the sort of a chap I am—no, not by a darned sight! Ef I am, you may call me a liar! So you go and help your mam to git ready, and then off we goes in a jiffy. But ef you'd like to say a word or so to the stranger in thar, why come and do it now. He's a fair-spoken man enough, I guess, though he's some sort of a furriner."

"I don't want to look at him," exclaimed Lal, who had not yet recovered her equanimity, and who, seeing that the battle was over, had accepted the situation and was busily engaged in getting her things together—"I don't want to look at him. I've enough to do to pack up, seein' as we've got to go in half an hour."

"All right! Thar ain't no perticklar needcessity for you to see him. He's a tony kind of a chap, though, and kind o' different from the boys around here. And you look so darned nice in your fixin's, that I jist thought I'd like him to see what a spruced-up gal the old butte can turn out when it tries. But I guess you're about right. There ain't no time to spar'; so while you and your mam gits things ready I'll settle the trade with him, and we'll be off to Bighorn Springs afore it's dark."

"Father," said Lal, ceasing her work and coming up to him while she laid her hands on his arms, "when you git the money for the ranch you'll be so to say pretty rich, and I want you to promise me to leave these parts and go somewhar whar you won't have to go round trampin' at night and havin' people down on you. I'm not so much of a baby but what I kin work for you and mam. I'm not afraid, neither. I don't know much, that's sartin, but I can learn more, and ef we was all settled down in some quiet place we'd be happier than leadin' this sort of a life. O, father," she continued, with increased earnestness, "I've often wanted to say this to you, but I've never had jist the right kind o' a chance till now." She clasped her arms around his neck and looked pleadingly into his face, while her eyes filled with tears.

Mr. Bosler was evidently impressed with the force of the appeal made to him. His one eye twinkled with increased activity. The muscles of his face twitched convulsively, and he wriggled in his clothes as though he were endeavoring to twist himself out of them. He put one arm around his daughter's waist.

"Why, Lal, gal," he said at last, though in a broken and husky voice, "what's got into you all on a suddent? You ain't ashamed of your old father, are you, because he picks up a loose hoss or may be a mule now and then, from fellows as has no more right to 'em nor he has?"

"I don't know," answered the girl, while she sobbed with emotion, which she vainly endeavored to suppress. "Sometimes I think I am. It ain't right—no, no, it ain't right—and once you would 'a' knowed so, too. O, father! let's go away—far, far away. You're gittin' old, and things is all goin' wrong with us, I know."

Mr. Bosler showed evidences of still greater mental disturbance. He looked as though his feelings were hurt, and, breaking from Lal's embrace, he shuffled up and down

the floor for several turns, doubtless with the hope of soothing his troubled emotions by the physical exercise. In the mean time, Lal had covered her face with her hands and was sobbing convulsively, while the tears flowed through her fingers.

"Well!" at last said her father, assuming the injured tone of voice he so often affected as though he was constantly under the belief that the world had combined to persecute him—"well! I wish I may be blowed ef my own daughter ain't ag'in me; her as I've raised from a infant and clothed and fed by the sweat o' my brow—often, too, at the resk o' my life! Even my own daughter," he continued, his accents of injured innocence becoming tinged with a slight degree of anger. "No wonder the Hellbender cusses is ag'in me. No wonder the world is down on me. But dang me ef I'll stand it!" he exclaimed, his voice becoming louder and huskier. "I'll give you to a man as I knows of as'll tame you, I guess. I'll—" He stopped suddenly, for his eyes caught the look that was on Lal's face. The girl had ceased crying and was standing in the middle of the room, her lips compressed, her face as pale as a sheet, her eyes staring at vacancy, her hands grasping convulsively the back of a chair as if to keep herself from falling, while her breath came quickly and spasmodically, like that of a person in the incipiency of suffocation. Mr. Bosler was frightened. He was fond of his daughter; fonder than of anything else on the face of the earth. His threat was the result of his anger, and whatever basis there might be for it, he had no intention at that time of carrying it into execution. Indeed, he had determined in his own mind long ago, that a certain promise he had made should not be fulfilled, even if bloodshed resulted from the failure to keep his word. He, therefore, deemed it best to disabuse Lal's mind of the impression his words had conveyed, not only that she might be reduced to a tranquil state and

hence rendered more useful as well as happier, but also that his own mental peace might be secured. In the execution of his philanthropic intentions he shuffled up to where his daughter stood, and putting an arm around her waist while he patted her cheek with his other hand, he said in his most seductive accents :

"Don't you be skeered now, Lal. You see I didn't know what I was sayin' till the words was out o' my mouth. Do you think I'd let any o' them Cañon fellows have my gal? Not ef I knows myself, and I think I do. Prehaps you're right 'bout it. But it's the liquor as does it. Ef it wan't for that I wouldn't be sich a all-fired hard cuss. But, you see, when I gits a leetle too much into me, ef it's only one drink, it makes me so rickless that I don't care for nothin' nor nobody, but lets things go jist as they come up in my mind. Ef it wan't for that I'd never p'int a six-shooter at nobody onless it was he p'inted one at me first. But ef I git out o' this scrape, I shouldn't wonder ef things went different with me. Now don't you bother about it, but jist go and help your mam, and I'll see the color o' this man's money. I mought, may be, scrape together here and thar a right smart pile; enough, I guess, to give you a little schoolin'. Now you go," releasing her from his embrace. "You're a good gal, and I'll see, yes, I'll see what I can do about it."

During the delivery of this long harangue, Lal had gradually recovered her composure. She was obliged, for the present at least, to be satisfied with his assurance and half promise. She therefore rejoined her mother, and Mr. Bosler went to meet his visitor and to conclude the inchoate bargain. The terms were accepted, not without a little apparent hesitation, and two hundred dollars in gold were counted out to him in exchange for a bill of sale that made John Tyscovus the owner of the butte and its appurtenances.

And then the whole Bosler family prepared to take their departure. The wagon stood at the door in readiness, and the personal baggage and joint effects of the intending travelers had been stowed away in the rear, while two seats in the front served for the occupation of Mr. and Mrs. Bosler and Lal—the latter having a board to herself. She had fought rather shy of Tyscovus. Her father had brought her up and introduced her in due form, but she had merely nodded her head in answer to Tyscovus's bow, and had then turned away without saying a word. It was evident that she was suspicious of him, and not at all inclined to be on friendly terms. The two older people, however, by their effusive demonstrations toward their successor, more than made amends for all the girl's coolness.

But, as the preparations for departure verged toward completeness, Mr. Bosler and his wife began to show some degree of anxiety to get off, doubtless bearing in mind the contents of the epistle that some sympathizing friend had sent to him. Lal, however, lingered about the house, making "much ado about nothing," till her father and mother had taken their seats in the vehicle that was to bear them away to their temporary home at Bighorn Springs. Then she furtively beckoned to Tyscovus, who was standing in the passage prepared to bid a good-by to the departing trio, and, when he came to her at the door of her room, she said:

"You ain't got no hosses, have you?"

"Not yet, though I probably shall have a pair of broken-down ones in a few days."

"They'll pick up some here. The grass is rich. But come here—I want to show you somethin'!" saying which she led the way to the other room, and, pointing to a bell fastened to the ceiling near the center of the apartment, said:

"Do you see that bell?"

"Yes."

"Well, thar's a rope as leads from the stable-door to that bell—but it ain't up now; some one must have took it down—and when the door's opened it rings the bell. So, you see, as father was always afeared his hosses mought be took, he rigged up that bell so as he'd be sure to hear ef any one came thar in the night."

"A very admirable telegraph system, fully calculated to answer the purpose for which it was intended. But I shall scarcely need it, as no one will be likely to steal my horses."

"Don't you count on that. Some people is jist crazy after hosses, and I wouldn't trust no one in these parts. So I think you'd better put up the rope ag'in. It used to lead up from the stable-door to the tree and then to the house. The pulleys, I guess, is all there still."

"Well, Miss Bosler," said Tyscovus, smiling at the evident interest she took in the safety of his horses, "I am very much obliged to you, and if I have horses I shall certainly replace the arrangement."

"Come along, Lal!" called out Mr. Bosler from the wagon. "We're all ready here, and only waitin' for you to git in. We've five miles to go to-night, and a good deal to do too after we git thar."

"Yes, father, I'm comin'.—And oh, sir," she continued, clasping her hands together and again addressing Tyscovus, "ef you should happen to hear the bell ring some night, don't shoot to kill. Jist fire off your six-shooter two or three times to scare 'em, but don't p'int it at 'em. It'll be enough to scare 'em ef you fire it off; and you wouldn't kill a man for a hoss, would you?"

"I don't know about that, Miss Bosler," answered Tyscovus, still amused at her earnestness, though ignorant of its cause. "If I knew some one was trying to steal my horse, I think I should endeavor to do him some damage and he might get killed."

"I thought may be you'd promise. You don't look like a hard man," she continued, gazing at him fixedly, "but looks is sometimes deceivin'. Ef you was to fire at 'em, jist as like as not they'd fire back, and then you mought git killed yourself."

"Of course. The man that would steal a horse would doubtless just as soon as not kill the owner. I must take the consequences, and so must he should any such attempt be made."

"Lal! ef you don't come right away, blow me ef I don't drive off and leave you to foot it all the way to Bighorn!" exclaimed Mr. Bosler. "What in the devil is the gal talkin' about?"

"I rather hoped you would promise," resumed Lal, not heeding her father's summons. "It ain't much for me to ask nor for you to do." She turned sharply away, and had slowly taken several steps toward the wagon when Tyscovus exclaimed:

"Stop, Miss Bosler. I have not the heart to refuse you, even though your request does strike me as being a little unreasonable. You shall have it as you wish. I will not shoot to kill, or even to wound, if they should carry off the whole stable and its contents, so long as they do not attempt to steal me."

"I'm much obliged," said Lal, returning and taking his hand. "You're not as hard as I took you to be." She smiled, and Tyscovus for the first time thought she looked pretty. "Good-by," she continued, "prehaps you mought some day want a friend, and then you kin count on me."

"Thanks," said Tyscovus, raising his hat with as much dignity and grace as though he were speaking to a princess. "I shall be happy to serve you in any way in my power; and if I seemed to hesitate just now it was only because I could see no reason for your request. A woman's reasons, however, are sometimes unfathomable."

He followed her to the wagon and helped her to her seat. Then Mr. Bosler cracked his whip, and, amid wishes for good luck reciprocally exchanged, the team slowly descended the hill, and Tyscovus was left in the full and undisputed possession of his purchase. As we have seen, however, he was not allowed to remain long unmolested.

CHAPTER IV.

A WELCOME VISITOR.

THE morning after the stirring incidents recorded in the preceding chapters, Tyscovus was early awakened by the falling of drops of water on his upturned face as he lay asleep upon the floor. He jumped up and looked out of the window. The rain was pouring in torrents, and several pools of water, caused by the drippings from the leaky roof, had formed near where he had lain. The apartment still bore the marks of the inroad of the vigilance committee. The door, which had been burst open, had parted with both latch and hinges and merely rested against the lintels, and the floor gave evidence of the muddy boots worn by the dozen or more rough men that had invaded the premises the night before. Altogether the circumstances and the surroundings were not enlivening, but Tyscovus was one of those rare souls that are able to find occupation and amusement in their own thoughts or resources. There was enough for him to do.

First, despite the state of the weather, and profiting by the fact that there was probably not a human being to whose gaze he ran the risk of being exposed, he divested himself of his clothing, and, making his way down the butte, plunged into the creek and floundered about in its cool water, already swollen and turbid from the rain. Previously to his bath he had felt mentally and physically languid, but now he seemed to have regained his wonted ener-

gies of body and mind, and he sprang up the hill in the pelting rain with a lightness and strength that argued well for the robustness of his constitution. He walked about on the plateau, luxuriating in his supplementary shower-bath, each drop of which stung his skin pleasantly and heightened the reaction he was experiencing. How long he would have continued this pleasant exercise is uncertain, but when he had spent nearly an hour in the refreshing promenade in the rain he began to experience the pangs of hunger. He therefore finished his toilet in front of a large fire that he kindled, and, donning some clean linen that he took from his knapsack, made himself a pot of coffee, toasted a couple of slices of bacon, and, adding a hard biscuit, sat down to his first breakfast on the butte.

Nearly a week ago he had started from Denver, well mounted, and with a light wagon loaded with his baggage. But, on the fourth night out, all his horses were stampeded, by a pack of wolves that rushed through his camp, and not one of them was recovered. Thus, he had found himself on the prairie with only his teamster for a companion, and with the prospect of one of the two being obliged to walk to the nearest settlement, fifty miles distant, in order to procure assistance, while the other remained in charge of the wagon. Fortunately, just as he had determined to send the man for aid, he was overtaken by a party of half a dozen men going to Hellbender, and they, being well provided with animals, he had been able to buy a couple of horses to haul his wagon to its destination. But the roads were heavy, and, though he and the driver walked in order to lighten the load as much as possible, the team was almost completely exhausted before reaching Hellbender. He therefore decided to leave his effects in charge of the man, with directions to travel a very few miles each day, and then, taking a knapsack and stocking it with a few requisites, he had pushed on ahead.

He was a good walker, and besides he had a far better opportunity to study the country than he would have had if cooped up in a wagon. For four days he was on the road, bivouacking at night by the side of a spring or brook, and, though suffering somewhat from the cold peculiar to that region in the autumn after sunset, enjoying the physical exercise, the pure, bracing air, and the simple meals to which he was confined. Arriving at Hellbender, he had at first determined to remain there till his wagon came up, but on second thought deemed it better not to rest till he had reached his destination, and secured, if possible, the ownership of the knoll of which he was in search. As we have seen, everything had resulted to his satisfaction.

As he sat before the fire after eating his breakfast, he reflected that it would probably yet be several days before he could reasonably expect the advent of the wagon with his books and papers. He had directed the teamster to rest two days at Hellbender, and then to follow the road to The Cañon till he received further instructions. It was necessary, therefore, for him to watch the road, in order that the man should not go too far. This was an easy task, as, from his commanding position on the butte, in its situation not unlike an observatory, or the castle of some feudal baron, he could see such an object as the wagon while it was yet a long distance off. However, there was time enough for that.

And in the mean time he might be doing something in the way of examining his estate, and in putting it in better order than existed when it came into his possession. The rain had ceased, and the sun was endeavoring to break through the clouds, every now and then receiving sufficient encouragement to warrant a perseverance in the attempt. He, therefore, went out to take a survey of his possessions.

First of all he proceeded to the stable. This he found to be a log-hut, not much worse as a shelter than the one

he himself inhabited. It consisted of a single room, about twenty feet square, and was built on a sort of a terrace that had been dug out of the side of the hill near the base, and opposite to the path by which he had ascended. There were stalls for three horses and room for a wagon besides—all the space he would be likely to require. Without difficulty he found the rope to which Lal Bosler had called his attention, and he spent half an hour in attaching it to the door and to the bell in his room.

Then he descended to the plain, and inspected the boundaries of his property. He ascertained that the butte stood almost in the center of the tract of land he had purchased, which also included about an acre of timber-land, so that he should not want for fuel, generally so scarce in that part of the country. Finally, he returned to what was now his home, and, taking out his pipe, filled it with tobacco, lit it and began to smoke.

During his walk he had diligently renewed his search for the book that he had missed the night before, but it was nowhere to be seen. He recollected that just after eating his midday meal he had taken it from his knapsack to read a few pages from it, while resting in the shade of a cottonwood-tree during the heat of the early part of the afternoon, and that on resuming his journey he had put it back in the same place from which he had taken it. Doubtless it was lost somewhere on the road, and there was but little chance that it would ever again come into his possession. The book was a rare one. Indeed, it was well known to bibliophilists that no other copy was in existence; but it was precious to him not so much on this account as that it was the life of one of his great ancestors, a certain Count John Tyscovicius, who in the early part of the seventeenth century suffered a frightful martyrdom for his religious faith. Among other things, it contained many of the philosophical maxims of this learned man, and it was the habit

of his descendant to read these at different times, and to reflect upon them, evolving often from the lines of thought suggested, other thoughts of his own that bore upon the objects he had in view. The loss of the book, therefore, was a great privation to him, for though he knew it almost by heart, from beginning to end, the recollection could not take the place of the actual words before his eyes.

He tried to forget the matter, and while the smoke rolled from his lips, his mind, influenced doubtless as much by the isolation of his position as by the sedative influence of the tobacco, worked in a listless, dreamy sort of a way, rambling from one thing to another, and never going deeply into any subject it touched.

"I am not quite sure," he thought, "that in one sense at least I am not fairly entitled to the appellation of 'John Buridan's Ass,' that my father gave me when I was ten years old. To think that I should have come all the way from Poland to discover this place, and should really find it exactly as it had been pictured to me, are certainly remarkable facts. And it is still more astonishing that the knoll and its surroundings should have been originally brought to my mind in so surprising a manner. But, now that I am here, the motive for coming seems strangely inadequate. Surely there is solitude enough in Poland to answer my purposes without the necessity of traveling more than five thousand miles to obtain it. Still, I have what I came for, and to a degree equal to that, apparently, to be had on any other part of the earth's surface. Here I can meditate without risk of being disturbed every moment by the petty cares or labors that those who live in the society of mankind can never expect to escape.

"I don't think I am superstitious. I certainly do not believe in a man's being subject to impulsions from some occult influence that he can not resist; and yet, if not that, how am I to escape the idea that I have been so acted upon?

What alternative is there but that of chance; and could chance, accident, hap-hazard, have created the conception in my mind, and then have brought me straight to the spot, over seas and plains and rivers and mountains, to find it just as it had been described? It is possible there is some such power acting upon us at times, with a force that we do not feel save by its effects — calmly, irresistibly leading or driving us onward to an intelligent conclusion, a logical goal; and we poor, blind mortals, imagining that we are guided by chance, which of course is no guide at all; or that we are acting from our own intuitions."

His pipe was exhausted, and, taking a little gold tobacco-box from his pocket, he refilled and relighted it."

"And yet it is just the place my soul craves," he went on, after satisfying himself that his pipe was fairly started. "Solitude there is in Poland, but it is liable to be broken at any moment; isolation is the law of Siberia, but it is of such a character that life is not tolerable under its influence. Sequestration I had there for three long and weary years, but with a degree of physical and mental suffering that almost wore me out. But here," he continued, rising from the chair and pacing the floor in the excitement his thoughts developed, "here I can live secure from intrusion, except"—as he thought of the incursion of the night before —"from the visits of vigilance committees, though, as the cause has disappeared, there will be nothing more to apprehend on that score. And here, with only my own thoughts and my books, and in the presence of this vast Nature, where there are no events to divert the mind from its labors, and no human being to weary and disgust me, I shall do the work of the new life upon which I have entered. Here, more than seven thousand feet above the sea, I can breathe an atmosphere uncontaminated by the filth of civilization, and lead a life that must necessarily be virtuous, for sin and

crime are alike impossible. Good Heavens! what a righteous world this would be if each individual in it were separated from the polluting influence of association with his fellows! From this height I look out over hundreds of square miles without seeing a human being, or even a sign that man has ever set foot in the country. There is not even a vestige of animal life, not a bird nor a beast—yes, there is a solitary coyote, sneaking back to his hole after helping to make night hideous; leaving his companions to go to his kithless den to enjoy the delights of solitude! But perhaps he has a mate to interfere with his liberty, while I am alone, cut off, isolated, with only myself to consult, and no one to say 'nay' to anything within my power that I may choose to do. In so far, I am more fortunate than that wolf."

He sat down again and continued to puff vigorously at his pipe. As he lay back on his chair his eyes fell upon the bell hanging to a beam overhead, and to which he had fastened the rope connected with the stable-door.

"Well!" he said, with a tone of intense contempt, "that was an idiotic thing for a man to do whose chief object in life is to obtain solitude. I shall probably have a horse or two, for horses are modest animals and do not intrude on you when they are not wanted; but if I should have fifty, why should I thrust myself into contact with any ruffian that should take a fancy to them? Better far to let them go than to be instrumental in causing an event in which I must necessarily be a prominent actor. If gentlemen stole horses, there might be some excuse for devising means to let me know when they were about to pay me a visit, but to be driven into relations with a vulgar horse-thief would be intolerable. No, I will have nothing of the kind."

He rose, and, going to a corner of the room, seized a long pole that stood there, and with a blow brought the bell to

the floor. After this performance he again sat down and resumed his pipe and his reflections.

"I wonder," he thought, "why that girl was so anxious that I should run no risk of shooting the enterprising individual that might attempt to steal my horses? By Saint Stanislaus, it never struck me before; but I now see that she was looking out for her father's safety, Mr. Jim Bosler, the horse-thief, whom the public-spirited vigilance committee were so anxious to string up by the neck last night! And so that pretty girl is a horse-thief's daughter! Poor child, I pity her. But she will doubtless hold her own in the world, for she has all the *finesse* of a trained diplomatist in her composition."

The sound of footsteps on the floor of the passage interrupted him, and he could scarcely get out the words: "Now, who the devil is there?" when a half-dozen loud knocks on what was now only a door by courtesy, caused him to spring from his chair and to approach the opening. Before he could remove the obstruction to free entrance, it was pushed aside from without, and, without ceremony or hesitation, a man squeezed through the aperture into the room.

"What do you mean!" exclaimed Tyscovus, angrily, facing the individual menacingly, "by coming into my house in that manner without leave or license?"

"Now, don't be mad, stranger," replied the intruder, seating himself on a chair close at hand. "You see, I was here last night with the committee, and I jist thought I would ride over from Hellbender this mornin' and see how you was gittin' along. Quite in a friendly way—for, o' course, I've nothin' ag'in you, and you can't have nothin' ag'in me neither."

"Well, my friend—for I suppose I must consider you in that light—now that you have come, please oblige me by going away as quickly as you can. I am not at all in need of your society, and I wish to be alone."

"Now, look here, stranger, don't be so all-fired huffy jist because I looked in on you in a neighborly sort of a way. You see, I'm a store-keeper down thar in Hellbender, with a complete line o' dry-goods, groceries, and notions, to say nothin' o' household and kitchin furniture and provisions generally. And it mought be that you'll be wantin' somethin' in my way afore long. If so, you'll find that I've got the finest and biggest assortment of everything to eat, drink, and wear, as is to be raked together this side o' Denver. My name's Higgins, Samuel T. Higgins, born in Illinois, raised in Pike County, Missouri, and flourishing in Colorado. I heard your name last night, but it's too much for me; so, ef you've no objection, I'll call you 'captain.'"

Tyscovus reflected a moment before replying to this epitomized autobiography of Mr. Higgins. He had made no arrangements for supplying himself with food, and perhaps he had now the opportunity of doing so without having to think of the matter day after day. Nothing was more insufferable to him than those details of life so necessary to be attended to, and yet so insignificant in themselves. If he could, by paying Mr. Higgins a fixed sum, provide for all his wants for a year, he would be very glad to do so. Something must be done. He had seen that morning, during his wanderings, that there were plenty of trout in Wildcat Creek, and doubtless he would be able to kill a rabbit or a black grouse now and then, after the wagon arrived with his guns and ammunition; but he could not very well depend on these uncertain means of food-supply, and there were many utensils and articles of provision he would require. Upon the whole, therefore, he concluded that Mr. Higgins's visit was not inopportune. With a smile on his face he turned to the applicant for his custom.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Higgins," he said, holding out his hand, which that gentleman grasped with effusion,

"for my rudeness. The truth is, that your arrival was so sudden, and I was so busy thinking of other things when you knocked at the door, that I forgot my good manners. I am glad to see you. There are many things I shall want of you, and if you will kindly make a note of them now you will save me a great deal of trouble."

"Don't mention it, captain," remarked Mr. Higgins. "I seen you was worried about somethin', and I ain't one o' them thin-skinned fellows as gits mad at every word, ef it *is* a little cross. Now," he continued, taking from his pocket a note-book and pencil, "give us the items, and ef I ain't got 'em, I'll git 'em for you ef I have to send to Denver for 'em."

"Thanks," said Tyscovus. "Now we understand each other nicely. First of all, I want a couple of chairs and tables, and about five hundred feet of lumber, two or three pans, the same number of earthen pots, a tea-kettle, and a small stove."

"Plates, dishes, knives and forks, a bed and bedding, towels, and sich like," continued Mr. Higgins, looking round the room.

"No; I have a well-furnished mess-chest and all the other things you mention, besides an iron bedstead and bedding. I have also all the clothing I shall need. Everything is in my wagon, which will not arrive for two or three days yet. I expect to live here quite alone, and to do all my own work, even to cooking my food and washing my clothes. You know how much and what things I ought to eat—say every month. Send me those things without any further orders from me. I should say potatoes, rice, canned fruits and vegetables—which you put up so well in this country—sugar, salt, tea, and coffee."

"All right, captain! I think I understand. You're a man of business and so am I. You're not very stout now," he continued, running his eyes over Tyscovus's figure, "and

thar's enough room to spread. I'll send the things over to-morrow. Let's see—this is the 10th of September. Well, on the 10th of every month you'll git 'em as punctual as clock-work. You won't have no manner of bother over it. They'll come, and all you'll have to do is to eat 'em, and," he added, after a slight pause, "pay for 'em. Cash's the rule in these parts."

"And quite right, too. Here are fifty dollars to begin with," said Tyscovus, placing five ten-dollar gold pieces in Mr. Higgins's hand, "and the remainder will be paid on the delivery of the goods. I want the lumber as soon as possible, for the house needs a roof, and I am going to put it on myself."

"Put it on yourself!" exclaimed Mr. Higgins; "captain," he continued, in an imploring tone of voice, "don't try it. You ain't made for work o' that kind. You jist set down and look at 'em, and I'll send Stokes the carpenter, and some of his men over here, and they'll do it quicker and better than you can."

"No, I prefer to do my own work. Besides, why should I not, for I am a carpenter by trade?"

"You a carpenter!" said Mr. Higgins, in a tone of voice so loud and so elevated that it was almost a shriek, at the same time looking at Tyscovus's hands, which were certainly not those of a tradesman—"you a carpenter!" he repeated, in accents that had something of reproach and sorrow in them. "Now, captain, it's possible I look like a fool and may be I *am* one, but I didn't think you'd try to come it over a friend in that way. Mought I ask," he went on, his tone changing to one of incredulity and banter, "whar did you learn your trade?"

"In a prison," answered Tyscovus.

"In jail?"

"Yes, I am an escaped convict."

"Then, by the Lord! you take it quite nat'ral like. It

don't go to rile you much, does it? I've seen escaped convicts afore now, but they weren't as peart about it as you air. *They* rather wanted to keep dark about that one part of their lives, because, you see, thar's pretty generally rewards out for them sort of cusses. But you blurt it out as ef it war somethin' to be proud of."

"Yes, I am proud of the fact that I am an escaped convict. I regard the term of my imprisonment as that part of my life of which I have most reason to feel no shame, miserable as it was while it lasted. Besides, the gracious sovereign who saw fit to imprison me, also deemed me a suitable object of mercy, and granted me a full pardon; not, however, till I had set myself free."

"Forgery?" said Mr. Higgins.

"No."

"Bank president, and stole the funds?"

"No."

"Counterfeiter?"

"No."

"Pizened your wife?"

"No—I never had a wife."

"Well! what in thunder air you?" exclaimed Mr. Higgins, with less respect in his manner than he had exhibited in the early part of his interview. "What in the devil did you do?"

"I committed blasphemy. It is the hereditary crime of our family."

"That's swearin', ain't it? Ef that's all, why then, captain, I'm bound to say that your country is darnation strict. Ef they was to put men in jail here for swearin', blow me ef they wouldn't have more'n half the Territory in prison!"

"I did not exactly swear," said Tyscovus, "neither did I speak disrespectfully of God; I only said a few light and thoughtless words about the ruler of sixty millions of peo-

ple, when I was a student and had taken a little more wine than was good for me. For that I was tried by a court-martial and condemned to ten years' imprisonment in Siberia. There I was taught the trade of a carpenter. But, after three years of exile and suffering, I succeeded in making my escape. And shortly afterward the Czar, hearing all the facts of the case, granted me a full and unconditional pardon. But I am, as you see, an escaped convict, though not the kind of a one you supposed."

"Give us your hand, captain. You're the man for me, by gum! Take back your fifty dollars, and don't you talk about paying me in advance. I'll trust you jist as long as you like. You're a patriot, that's what you air. Give us your hand, captain, and darn the Czar!" With which emphatic words Mr. Higgins grasped Tyscovus's hand and shook it till the owner winced.

"No," said Tyscovus, as Mr. Higgins pressed the five gold pieces upon him—"no; keep them. It is just as convenient for me to give them to you now as at any other time, for, as you know, I have no use for money here."

"They'd burn a hole in my pocket ef I was to keep 'em," rejoined Mr. Higgins. "No; ef you won't take 'em, I'll jist lay 'em here on the table. Good-by, captain," he continued, again shaking Tyscovus by the hand. "You're in a land of liberty and equality now, thank God, and can hold your head up with the rest of us! Good-by. You'll find the things comin' along to-morrow, and I'll tell the boys what a true son of freedom you air." And with these words Mr. Higgins strode to the place where he had hitched his horse, and mounting that animal rode down the butte, while Tyscovus watched him as he galloped over the road to Hellbender.

"And this," he thought, "is my first day of solitude. A vigilance committee and a man that will bring all his friends and acquaintances to see the 'escaped convict,' that is at

the same time 'a patriot' and a 'son of freedom'! It will never do! At this rate I shall not only not finish my task, but I shall not even begin it. But there is no time like the present for what one has to do. This very moment I will inaugurate the work to which the two coming years, at least, of my life are to be devoted. Once begun, the labor will be light. It will be a joy to which I have looked forward with hope, and just enough fear and trembling to prevent insipidity. Yes, I will begin at once."

CHAPTER V.

WAS IT A DREAM?

TYSCOVUS opened his knapsack, and, taking from it the materials for writing, sat down at the rough table and endeavored to compose his thoughts. He had for a long time reflected deeply on the subject of the treatise he desired to give to the world, and had made extensive and profound studies in connection therewith. While a prisoner in Siberia—for having, at a convivial gathering of students of the University of Warsaw, said that, "after all, the Czar was only a man, that a coal of fire would burn his skin as well as that of a beggar, and that the same necessity existed for him to eat, drink, and sleep as was felt by a peasant"—while in banishment and in prison for this want of respect to his master, he had arranged in his own mind the materials he had collected up to that time, and had thought it would be an easy matter to write out his ideas. Since his escape, however, he had visited Germany, France, and England, and had exchanged views with many wise and learned men on the subject of his meditations, until finally, as is always the case under like circumstances, except with fools, he had ascertained that what he knew of the matters in question was but a small part of the accumulated knowledge of centuries, and that his conceptions were of the wildest and most superficial character.

Then he began from new stand-points to reinvestigate all the phenomena of nature bearing upon his studies. He

found out what had already been done by others working in like directions, and he was able to profit by the mistakes they had made. New lines of inquiry were suggested to him. Some of these he followed till he ascertained that they led to nothing definite; others he worked to advantage to a certain distance, and then discovered that nothing more was to be obtained by longer continuance in the course they indicated; while still others, and by far the smallest number, he found to yield the most precious results.

Then, he had been irresistibly led to the conviction that the Old World had given him all it was capable of affording, and that if he courted originality he must seek in other lands, in which there existed a newer civilization and in which the physical surroundings were different, for the ideas that should give scope and depth and individuality to his work. Many of his views were of striking originality, and, moreover, he had formed new notions in regard to the way in which opinions should be presented to the world in order to make the most vivid and enduring impressions. He found that the associations he had contracted were not such as were best adapted to the advanced stage of thought he had reached, and that, for the full development of his theories, he must cut loose from all the ties he had formed, and in the vastness and solitude of nature give his mind that opportunity for introspection and for abstract thought which it could never have as he was then situated. He had studied his own character and temperament with all the thoroughness and disinterestedness of which he was capable, and had become convinced that the weaknesses he had discovered were of such a nature as to stand like a great wall against all his efforts to advance. He was impressionable, lacking in power of decision, and prone to inconstancy, when everything demanded the most rigid perseverance. His emotions were thus easily aroused, and when they were excited they governed him, till they had,

through their own force and intensity, exhausted their vitality, and reason was again permitted to assume control.

These were characteristics that, perhaps, in the earlier part of his career, were not prejudicial to his obtaining an extended knowledge of mankind, and of the conditions by which humanity is surrounded. They had led him into the imprudent remarks, while in the company of spies and police-agents, that had resulted in his exile to Siberia. They had likewise been the means of getting him into numerous entanglements with men and women, from which he had not always escaped without suffering, even though there had been no sacrifice of honor. But, at the same time, they had been the means of bringing him into closer contact with human nature under many different phases. He had become experienced in the ways of the world to a degree that he could never have attained by the exercise of the highest mental powers; and the knowledge thus obtained had been used to the utmost advantage in the elaboration of the theories to which his mind had been directed. To describe humanity with thoroughness, it is not only necessary to mingle superficially with men and women of a certain class; one must *know* them, and of all kinds and conditions, and under all the different circumstances and situations of life.

But, finally, the time came when, after much self-examination, he was convinced that his whole nature must be changed if he desired to succeed in the work that he had laid out for himself. He was then nearly thirty years of age, and though we have daily evidence that under the influence of the grace of God the most thoroughly depraved of his creatures, even though they be well advanced in years, can be born again with new hearts and nobler aspirations, it must be confessed that such cases are rare. The change he felt it was necessary for him to undergo was even more revolutionary than the regeneration effected

through conversion from sin, and it was not to be accomplished through priestly ministrations or devotional exercises, but by the force of his own will, acting upon his impulses, his thoughts, his feelings, his very perceptions of things. From being infirm of purpose, he was to become resolute and determined; from being impulsive in his actions and inconstant in his pursuit of the ends he had in view, his conduct was to be marked by deliberation; and when once a line of procedure had been determined upon, it was not to be swerved from, without such good and sufficient reasons as he should feel in his heart were of overpowering force. "It is possible," he had said to himself, "for a person's ideas, and even his senses, to be influenced by the emotions that at the time govern him. He sees what he desires to see, or hears the sounds he fears. He thinks as his feelings incline him, instead of feeling in accordance with his thoughts. Everywhere emotion rules him. Here," he continued, "is a poem written by my friend Skobinsky; I admire it—I compare it to the immortal works of Dante or Shakespeare. I praise it to all my companions; I write laudatory reviews of it. Skobinsky is the dearest of all my friends. He once saved my life, and he has often rescued me from situations of the greatest peril to my liberty and happiness. How, therefore, can I be capable of a thoroughly disinterested opinion of his poem? Suppose he were an enemy and hateful to me, would I still find pleasure in the perusal of his verses and in the study of his thoughts? It is scarcely possible; and yet the book would be just as good.

"Levanoff, in his 'Review,' systematically attacked everything I wrote, and even descended to personal abuse. I determined to chastise him. 'No,' said Skobinsky, 'send him ten rubles as your subscription to his journal. It will be much less troublesome and far more efficacious.' I did so, and since then Levanoff has been most fulsome

in his praise of all that appears over my name. Doubtless he was sincere throughout. The ten rubles only made him see me in a different light.

"Now, I must get away from all emotion. I must avoid being subjected to its influence as it is exhibited in others, and I must crush it out in my own mind. To do this I must have solitude—solitude unbroken by the presence of living man or woman; and then—then—"

He was lying at full length on a sofa covered with the skin of a polar bear. He had been smoking, but his pipe was exhausted and had dropped to the floor by his side. Suddenly he saw before him a tall, gray-haired and gray-bearded man, wearing the robes of an Aulic councilor. The old man stood for a moment steadily regarding him with an expression of keen interest on his face, and then slowly approached, till he stood close by the couch. He raised his hands as though to ask attention, and then spoke, in a soft, melodious voice. "My son," he said, "you are right, you require solitude for the complete amplification of your character. You have reached but one stage in your existence, and the change that is to come will be only another period of your mental growth. Some minds attain to their full proportions at an early age. Some characters are completed before manhood is reached. With you it is different, and many years will yet be required before you will gain that perfection of mental development that will surely eventually be yours. Hitherto, you have, like the child, done little more than receive impressions. True, you have used your means of investigation to good purpose, and have laid up a store of facts that will stand you well when you come to need them. Life opens two paths to the choice of man. The one leads to a fragrant garden and delightful groves, perfumed with the sweetest odors, where a verdant bed, bedecked with roses, invites the enchanted senses to a soft repose. This is that path of pleas-

ure that the multitude are so easily seduced to follow, and where music, dancing, and love are thought to convey such a variety of delights. The other is a less-frequented path, always tiresome, sometimes rugged, the progress through it slow and marked by dangerous precipices, down which the toilsome passenger often falls when he most thinks his footing secure. A dark, boundless desert, where the cries of savage animals, and the mournful boding of the raven are heard, presents itself to the affrighted mind. The path of pleasure conducts us to the world, but the rugged path of virtue leads to honor. The one winds through life to places and employments either in the city or at court. The other, sooner or later, leads to solitude. Upon the one road, a man may, perhaps, become a villain, rendered dear to society by his amiable vices; upon the other road it is true, he may be hated and despised, but he may become a man after my own heart."

"Stop!" exclaimed Tyscovus; "what you say is strangely familiar to me. Indeed, I have been reading those words this very night, exactly as you have spoken them. Who are you, and whence came you?"

"I am Zimmermann, and I am repeating to you a few sentences that you have just read, and that I desire to impress upon your mind."

"Zimmermann! the author of the 'Treatise on Solitude,' every precept of which has become a part of my mental being? But, no; the author of that learned work has been dead nearly a hundred years. You can not be he."

"It is not for me to argue with you on the subject of my identity. I am here solely for the purpose of guiding you aright in the new life you have resolved to lead, and to save you, if possible, from such a horrible fate as was my portion on this earth. For nearly seventy years I never knew one moment of unalloyed happiness, and ere I left this stage of existence my reason tottered and fell. Would

you learn why my life was wrecked? Because, while knowing how to obtain happiness, I lacked the force of will to carry out my own precepts. Experience had taught me that the rudiments of a great character could only be formed in solitude; that there alone the solidity of thought, the fondness for intellectual activity, the abhorrence of mental indolence, that constitute the characters of heroes and sages, were to be acquired. It is there that the mind gains the habit of thinking—there, where it is withdrawn from the contemplation of that variety of objects by which the attention is distracted, and turns inward to the contemplation of its own working."

"Tell me what I am to do," said Tyscovus, excitedly. "You only express my own thoughts, but the way to carry them out is not clear to me. I am ready to follow any course you may advise."

"That is well," rejoined the sage. "There is still, I see, enough of vitality in you to enable you to surmount the difficulties that now hinder your advance, and to permit your organization to ripen to its full fruition. But not here—no, not here! You must leave this country. Yes, turn your back upon the effete and corrupt civilization of this Old World, and go to that continent beyond the sea, where every one can, without hindrance, strike out his own path in his own way. There, amid its mountain-heights and table-lands, where the air is so highly rarefied that your lungs are forced to extreme expansion in order to get enough oxygen to serve the purposes of life; where the heart beats fuller and stronger; where the ozonized atmosphere destroys the impurities that here are incorporated into your system, and where your thoughts, consequently, are more profound, quicker, and, above all, are perhaps purer, nobler, and freer than those that are evolved in this king- and priest-ridden country, you will accomplish the work you have undertaken. Here it would be impossible."

"But your knowledge is greater than mine," said Tyscovus, eagerly; "I am in your hands. Name the place best suited to me, and to that place I will go as surely as you now stand before me!"

The old man cast his eyes toward a large globe that was placed in the corner of the room, and appeared to be studying it minutely, though it was at least twenty feet from where he stood. Tyscovus followed his gaze, and saw that the globe turned upon its axis, though no hand or other agency was near it. At last it stopped, and the venerable visitor again spoke:

"Towns and cities are nothing to me," he said, "and I can not guide you by a reference to such works of man. Besides, in that region they are springing up and dying out with every phase of the moon. But there is a spot, all the features of which are in consonance with your spiritual needs, and to that place I desire you to go. It is a conical hill, flattened on the top, and standing in a vast plain. A brook flows southward at its base On its western slope, and near its summit, is a single pine-tree. From a large bowlder, to the left of the path that leads to the top, and in a northwest direction, on a line with a snow-capped mountain-peak, three dead trees in a row, at right angles to the line of vision, will be seen. These trees are about a mile from the knoll, and distant from one another about ten feet."

"But how am I to find this hill? It will be an impossible undertaking."

"No, you will go to it without deviating a hand's breadth from the right direction. It is situated on the meridian of 105° 27′ 16″ west longitude, and on the parallel of 37° 19′ 21″ north latitude. You are a scholar, and are skilled in the art of astronomical observations. Farewell!"

Tyscovus started at these words, and picked up the pipe that lay at his feet. He looked around him amazedly, but

he was alone. In the corner stood the globe to which the visitant had referred, but there was nothing else to indicate that any part of his vision was a reality. He went to the globe and scanned it closely. There was a small red dot, scarcely as large as the head of a pin, on its surface. He ascertained its exact position. It was longitude 105° 27′ 16″ west, and latitude 37° 19′ 21″ north.

Whether he had fallen asleep and dreamed, the basis of his vision being his own thoughts of a few minutes previously; whether he had been in a reverie and abstracted from the contemplation of all else but his own reflections; whether some friend had played a practical joke upon him, or whether the spirit of Zimmermann had actually appeared to him, he did not know, nor did he care to inquire minutely into the circumstances. He went only so far as to ask if any one had entered the room, or had marked his globe with a spot of red ink or paint; but both questions received negative answers. He had faith in the intuitions he had received, and it was of no consequence whence they came. The drowning man snatches at the plank that floats in his way, without asking who pushed it toward him. The directions given him were so vividly impressed upon his mind that he felt sure they would not be forgotten. Nevertheless, he wrote them down in his note-book exactly as he recollected them.

He owned a dark and gloomy castle some hundred or more miles from Warsaw, untenanted except by an old man and his wife, who lived in one corner of it, and kept it from becoming the haunt of wild beasts. He resolved to pass six months in this castle, in order that he might initiate the change in his mental characteristics that was so desirable. Here, he practiced the most rigid scrutiny of his thoughts and emotions, and tried by constant effort to regulate them in accordance with his ideas of right and wrong. His rule of himself was harsh, but in the end he

had acquired the mastery of which he was in search. Certainly he no longer deserved the name of reproach that his father had once given him, and that had clung to him through all his life, of "John Buridan's Ass."

But this was only the beginning. After this period of what might well be called his probation, he started upon his journey for that land in which the alteration was to be completed and the work of his life accomplished. How his faith in his vision, or whatever else it was, was justified by the result, we have already seen.

CHAPTER VI.

"MY HOUSE IS MY CASTLE."

TYSCOVUS sat at the table, endeavoring to get his thoughts into good working order. It was impossible for him to do more than to begin the preliminary matter of his treatise, for his notes, which were very voluminous, were packed away with his luggage, and the wagon was still many miles distant from the butte. He had already formed in his mind the general plan of his work. It was no trouble to him to write, for he never began to put his thoughts on paper till he had elaborated them as thoroughly as was in his power, and then he wrote as fast as most men could talk. He began:

"CHAPTER FIRST.—THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF THIS TREATISE.

"Since the beginning of the historical period, and doubtless for ages before man's instinct led him to keep records of his thoughts, feelings, and actions, two diverse opinions have existed relative to that greatest of all problems—the essential—"

He stopped, for he distinctly heard the sound of heavy footsteps on the floor of the passage-way. In an instant they were followed by a loud knocking on the door. He had taken the trouble, after Mr. Higgins's departure, to replace the fastenings that had been so violently removed by the vigilance committee; he had turned the key in the

lock, and he determined that he would make no response to the unmistakable indications of a desire to enter that this second visitor of the day was making. He hoped, by this course, that the intruder would think him absent, asleep, or perhaps dead, and would go away. But in this he reckoned without his host, for the knocking continued with redoubled violence, and was supplemented by repeated requests to open the door, and threats of forcible entry, couched in no gentle or polite tones, if the demand were not immediately complied with. At last, seeing that there was no prospect of his tormentor taking himself off, fearful of another catastrophe to his door, and irritated beyond endurance by the persistency with which the blows and kicks were administered, Tyscovus sprang to his feet, and, throwing the door wide open, seized the disturber of his peace by the throat, and, without stopping to see what manner of man he was attacking, shook him with all the strength he had in his body, while he dispensed several vigorous kicks upon the fellow's nether limbs. For a moment the man seemed so much astonished at this unlooked-for assault that Tyscovus had things pretty much all his own way; but it was for only a moment. A pair of enormous arms were clasped around his chest, he felt as though his limbs were being crushed; he could scarcely breathe, and each instant he was sure he would be lifted from his feet and dashed headlong upon the floor. But, though the great muscular strength of his antagonist enabled him to raise Tyscovus from the ground, the latter always came down on his feet, and he held with the tenacity of a bull-dog to the grip he had on the man's throat. Then the stranger, who was a tall and powerful but at the same time an active individual, hooked his legs around those of Tyscovus, and bringing his whole weight to bear upon his adversary, forced him to the ground. Here the struggle was continued with varying advantage, first the one and then the

other being on top, and neither relaxing his hold. Already the contest had lasted several minutes, and both combatants were beginning to be exhausted, and yet neither showed any signs of yielding. No great amount of damage had been done, beyond the disarrangement of clothing necessarily incident to such an encounter. Tyscovus had maintained his hold on the neck-wear of the intruder; but, owing to the tight embrace that he suffered from the muscular arms that almost suffocated him, he had been unable to exert his full strength, or to give the twist necessary to the occlusion of his opponent's respiratory apparatus. No blow had been struck, for each felt that, if he let go for an instant, the other would not fail to take advantage of the occasion to complete the work he had set about to accomplish. Neither had spoken a word—not, perhaps, so much from a desire to be silent, as from the utter inability each experienced to articulate a sound. At last, however, victory seemed about to perch on the standard of Tyscovus. His staying faculty appeared to be superior to that of his antagonist; the latter's power to squeeze was evidently becoming less every moment. Tyscovus, finding the compression of his chest relaxing, put forth all his energies, and, with a desperate effort, succeeded in forcing his fists so violently and strongly against the man's throat as to still more impede the entrance of air into his lungs. Already he felt the elation incident to triumph long deferred, when suddenly the arms around his chest fell lifeless to the ground, the face before him became purple, the eyes at which he was looking rolled upward and their lids twitched convulsively. Then a deadly pallor swept over his adversary's countenance, and a spasm distorted his features. He ceased to struggle; his limbs stiffened out in one great throe. To all appearance he was dead.

Tyscovus was so exhausted by the tremendous physical exertion he had made that for a full minute he lay pant-

ing for breath and unable to rise. He had a vague idea that he had killed his adversary, but his brain was in such a state of commotion from the rough treatment he had received that his conceptions of the matter were by no means clear. The predominant emotion he experienced was still that of anger, and with this was a divided feeling of elation at his victory, and of having gotten rid of a brute in human form who had persisted in forcing himself into his house. At last, with some difficulty, he rose to his feet, and then looked with what calmness he could command at the prostrate form before him. Gradually he began to appreciate the circumstances of the situation, and to experience regret and alarm at the idea of the possible consequences of the contest through which he had passed. His first act was to rush into the room, and returning with a cup of cold water, to throw the contents into the man's face. Not the slightest evidence of vitality was exhibited. Then he bent over, and taking hold of the hand that lay stretched out motionless on the floor, he endeavored to feel the pulsation of the artery at the wrist, but there was not the faintest throb to be perceived. Without thinking, he let go the hand and it fell like lead, and with a loud noise, on the boards. "My God!" he exclaimed, the full horror of the crisis bursting with all its force upon him; "he is dead, and I have killed him!"

For a few moments he stood gazing stupidly at the body that lay limp and lifeless before him. What should he do? His first thought was to hurry away from the scene of his great misfortune, to turn his back upon a spot that was now hateful to him, and to return to Poland with all possible speed. There, while there might be spies, police-agents, informers, and a despotic military government, there was at least order; and people, unless they came with the majesty of the law, or an order from the commanding officer, did not venture to force themselves unbidden into

other people's houses. But this was only a momentary suggestion, that flashed through his mind and was gone without his judgment's accepting it even for an instant. His second thought was to go at once to Hellbender, which he knew to be the county-seat, and, informing the authorities of what he had done, give himself up to be dealt with according to law. Upon reflection, though he deeply regretted the untoward result of his contest—a result that he certainly had not intended—he could not seriously reproach himself for what had happened. The man had been a trespasser of a violent kind, and had persisted in attempting by might and main to enter a house without the permission of the owner. If every man's house was his castle surely he had the right to put such a person off of his premises, using such a degree of force as might be necessary to effect his purpose. This had been his intention, but the energetic resistance of the invader of his privacy had materially interfered with the task he had set himself, and death had ensued in the most unforeseen manner.

However, he could not conceive what had been the immediate cause of the calamity. He had, it is true, seized his antagonist by the cravat and shirt-collar, and had attempted to choke him; but he had not been able to accomplish this object to his entire satisfaction, or to such an extent as to seriously injure the man. Then he had pushed his clinched fists against his throat, and had certainly, for a little while, stopped his breath. But he understood enough of the human system to know that such an interruption was no serious matter, unless continued for a very much longer period than in this instance. Doubtless the man had died of some kind of heart-disease, and the efforts he had put forth, conjoined with the semi-strangulation Tyscovus had inflicted, had caused his death. He also called to mind the fact that the man's

strength had begun to fail before the struggle had reached its height, and before he had been able to choke him.

It will be seen, therefore, from the reasoning process going on in Tyscovus's mind, that he had, in a great measure, gotten over his agitation, and was looking at the matter in a cool and philosophical way very much to the credit of his intellect. Although, at the outset, he had broken through all the laws he had laid down for his guidance, and had been influenced by as much emotional activity as is generally shown by men under like circumstances, there was very little feeling connected with the ideas that now ran through his head. Still, he was sincerely sorry, and at any rate he had a duty to perform, and this he had no intention of shirking. Stooping once more to feel the man's pulse, and applying his ear to his chest to discover whether or not the heart was beating, and obtaining only negative evidence from both these procedures, he seized the body by the shoulders, and dragged it over the floor into the room that the man, when alive, had been so anxious to enter. He considered this a precaution necessary to prevent the coyotes and other wolves, so numerous in that part of the country, from devouring it during his contemplated absence. He then straightened out the limbs, not yet stiff —though at that great altitude rigidity ensues very soon after death—arranged the clothing, and then, before going, made a parting inspection of the form that, less than half an hour ago, was full of life and courage, but that now was food for the elements. The face was not distorted, and, but for the absence of all signs of vitality, it might easily have been supposed that sleep, not death, was the existent condition. The body was, as he had already practically discovered, that of a tall and powerfully built man, apparently not over forty years of age. The clothing was the rough costume of the country: a flannel shirt, trousers, and long, thick boots extending above his knees, and with the

soles studded with spikes like those worn by miners. The man's hat had fallen off in the struggle, and Tyscovus went out into the passage and brought it into the room. There was no name in it, to indicate to whom it belonged. He thought of searching the pockets for some evidence of identification, but, upon reflection, deemed it better to leave that process to the officers of the law, whom he intended to summon. Then he locked the door, and, putting the key into his pocket, started off on his journey to Hellbender.

He went down the hill, which, less than twenty-four hours previously, he had ascended with far different feelings from those that he now experienced. He reached the road, and, turning to the north, walked rapidly toward the town, in which it was quite possible he might have to remain a prisoner till a judicial inquiry, if not a trial for murder, could be begun and finished. And this was the first notable result of his journey of over five thousand miles in search of isolation! Truly the outlook was not encouraging.

As he trudged along the thought would every now and then occur to him that when the affair was ended he would return to Poland, a wiser if not a better man; and, abandoning all the studies to which the best years of his life had been given, confess himself worsted in his battle against ignorance and error, and spend the rest of his days in seclusion in his gloomy Polish castle, or perhaps in exile in Siberia. He knew that a refuge from the world could always be had whenever he chose to perpetrate an act, or even speak a word, against the despotism that ground his country in the dust.

He had walked a couple of miles on the dusty road, his eyes most of the time cast on the ground. He did not, therefore, see the man that was approaching him in an old-fashioned gig, drawn by a couple of fast-stepping trotters,

till the horses were so close to him as barely to be checked in time to prevent their running over him.

"Look out, my friend!" exclaimed the driver. "Why don't you watch where you are going? A little more, and my horses would have been over you."

"It seems to me," answered Tyscovus, with a little tinge of anger in his voice, "that it is you who should look out. You saw me, and I did not see you."

"By Jove, I believe you are right! But you see I did look out. If I had not, you would have been run over, and then I should have had, most likely, the opportunity of setting a broken arm or leg for you. The fact is, however," he continued, while a pleasant smile overspread his face, "I saw while you were half a mile off that you were deep in thought, and I was at once interested. Thinking men are rare in this country. So I drove right at you so as to have an excuse for stopping you. Can I be of any service to you? In this out-of-the-way region we should always be ready to help each other."

Tyscovus looked at the man with more attention than he had yet given to him. He was evidently of a class superior to any with which he had yet come in contact, and he was certainly kind and genial in his manner. A medical man, judging from his remarks about a broken arm or leg. At any other time, Tyscovus would have been ruffled at being spoken to in the patronizing tone adopted. He was not one to tolerate liberties, and, as he never interfered with others who pursued their own course without infringing on his rights, so he was intolerant of everything that seemed like a desire to pry into his affairs, or to interrupt him when he was diligently engaged in minding his own business. But now, matters with him were in such an unpleasant state that he began to experience the want of sympathy. His feeling of self-reliance was a little shaken; his desire for solitude was, at that instant at least, scarcely so

strong as it was a few hours previously. He had just killed a man, by misadventure, as he believed, but yet while he was endeavoring, to the utmost of his ability, to inflict bodily injury. Whoever has done this, under like circumstances, for the first time, can hardly escape some unpleasant qualms.

The man before him looked like a gentleman and spoke like one. Yes, he would tell him what had occurred and ask his advice.

CHAPTER VII.

A CHANGE OF BASE.

JIM BOSLER, on reaching the flat country at the foot of the butte, crossed Wildcat Creek and took the road leading to The Cañon. He had not proceeded more than half a mile over the prairie, before he turned off sharply to the west, being guided, apparently, by a few ruts cut by wagon-wheels in the soft, loamy soil. Here he found it necessary to go at a much slower rate of speed than that which he had adopted while on the well-beaten road he had first struck; for, not only was the ground comparatively unbroken by horse or wagon, but he deemed it expedient to keep a sharp lookout against missing his way, and thus being compelled to stay all night in the wagon.

All the occupants of the vehicle appeared to be disposed to silence. Mr. Bosler was not ordinarily of a communicative disposition, especially when—as in the present instance—he had many important matters on his mind. Beyond the exclamations that he considered it necessary every now and then to address to his horses, either for the purpose of accelerating their pace or quickening their faculty of attention, he had not opened his mouth to articulate a word.

On the contrary, Mrs. Bosler was naturally gifted with brilliant conversational powers, and rarely failed to put them to use upon the slightest provocation. This evening, however, she kept the silentest of silent tongues in her head, busying herself in watching the road, looking first to one side and then to the other, and occasionally bending

over the side of the wagon to give a glance behind, as though fearful of being followed. Every now and then, however, she addressed a few words in a low tone to her husband, who apparently took no other notice of her remarks than to urge his horses, with a cluck of his tongue or a snap of his whip, to greater speed.

Lal sat alone on the seat behind that occupied by her father and mother. During the first part of the journey, while it was still light enough, she read from a little vellum-bound book, rolling up the curtains of the wagon in order that she might see to better purpose. But, as night approached, finding, with every minute, increased difficulty in the pursuit of the knowledge or amusement she was extracting from the volume, she would stop and rub her eyes, as though to freshen them up to increased power of vision. Finally, the forces of nature became too much for her, so she closed the book, and, taking a piece of brown paper from the pocket of her dress, she wrapped it up carefully and laid it on the seat beside her. For a few moments after this act she sat in silence, seemingly deep in reflection over what she had read. It was now quite dark, and the obscurity was deepened from the fact that the wagon had entered a thick wood, through which, even in the broad light of day, the rays of the sun did not fully penetrate. Still greater care was now requisite in driving, and not infrequently the wheels struck against a stump or a large stone, though, as a rule, Bosler managed with a surprising degree of skill to avoid such obstacles.

"I don't quite like that man," said Lal, at last, as though expressing the sum-total of her thoughts since leaving the butte. "He thinks too much of himself, and don't care nothin' for them as is nothin' to him."

"Well! why should he, I'd like to know?" exclaimed Mrs. Bosler, with a little sharpness in her tone. "Who does? I don't, and you don't, neither."

"I don't mean that," answered Lal. "I mean as he's stuck up and proud, and thinks what he don't know ain't worth knowin', and that what other people says ain't worth sayin'."

"I can't see as you've had any chance to tell much about him."

There was silence for a few minutes, and then Lal again broke it.

"I'd like to know what he wanted our house for," she said, without addressing any one in particular, but as if giving utterance to a thought that troubled her. "He came right to it jist as ef he knowed whar to find it, and had made up his mind to git it afore he seed it."

"Now, what do folks ginerally want with houses, Lal Bosler?" inquired her mother with increased irritation, "ef not to live in 'em? Some friend o' his, I 'spose, told him about it, so he come and seen it, and paid his money."

"Yes, and I've got it in my pocket," said Mr. Bosler, joining in the conversation for the first time, and chuckling with satisfaction—"jist as good gold as Uncle Sam ever turned out o' his mint. Twenty on 'em! What he wants with the ranch is his own business, and I don't prepose to stick my spoon into another fellow's mush. Leastwise," he added, after a pause, during which he doubtless recollected several occasions on which he *had* stuck his spoon into other people's messes—"leastwise not this time, ef I knows myself."

"I don't like him nohow," reiterated Lal, doggedly, "and I never will neither."

"Well, as you ain't likely never to lay eyes on him ag'in, I don't see as it makes much difference whether you likes him or not," said the elder lady, "so you mought as well stop thinkin' about him. He'll never be nothin' to you, nor you to him."

"I ain't so sure about that, mam," said the girl. "Somehow or 'nother I feel as ef we hadn't seen the last of him."

"Now jist stop talkin', will you?" broke in Mr. Bosler. "We're nearly thar now, and I don't want no more noise than thar's needcessity for. For all I know thar may be parties in them shanties as we wouldn't want to see. Leastwise I wouldn't when I've two women on my hands to look after. Hush! thar they are jist at the fur end of the clearin'. I see the roofs shinin' in the moonlight. Now," he continued, reining up the horses, "you two stay here jist whar you air, and I'll git out and perspect around a bit." With these words he handed the lines to his wife, and, taking his revolver from its receptacle at the small of his back, jumped to the ground.

"Hold on right here, Moll," he continued, "till you hear me whistle. Then drive straight ahead, for it'll be all right. And don't keep up no gabblin' neither."

In a moment he was lost in the deep shadows of the woods, as he flitted noiselessly from tree to tree.

The two women were not exactly afraid, but they were certainly anxious. Neither uttered a word, and each could hear the beating of her heart, as she sat motionless, waiting for the signal from the man that it was safe to advance. Lal scarcely understood the full gravity of the situation. She knew that her father was something of an outlaw, that his conduct was not such as to command the respect even of the rough and non-exacting people among whom he lived, and that threats involving his life had been made. But she was not aware of the full extent of his iniquities, and that at that moment it would not have been safe for him to show himself at The Cañon, which had heretofore protected him. Mrs. Bosler, however, was fully acquainted with the fact that the vigilance committee of Hellbender had determined on her husband's death. She knew that the house

on the butte was to be visited that night, and that perhaps even at that moment search for him was being made. She had an inkling also that something had occurred at The Cañon that rendered it extremely dangerous to Mr. Bosler for him to visit that settlement, but what it was he had never clearly told her. He was generally extremely reticent in regard to his affairs and doings when away from home, but occasionally, when he had taken just the proper quantity of whisky to loosen his tongue, and not enough to make him ill-natured, he would let out little bits of information that served as guide-posts to those in search of further knowledge. Hence, she knew he had killed a man at The Cañon, but she had no idea that it was one of the most unprovoked and altogether beastly murders that had ever been enacted in the long list of outrages of which desperadoes in that region had been guilty. Mrs. Bosler's faith in the astuteness of her husband was supreme. Many a time before, he had been in fully as great peril and had always managed to escape. Once, however, a rifle-bullet sent after him had taken away the bridge of his nose and one eye, just as he was turning to give a parting shot at his pursuers. Strange as it may seem, she loved him, and this, though her whole life, for the twenty years she had been his wife, had been one of hardship and degradation; for drunken, thieving, murderous as he was, he had always, after his fashion, been kind to her and Lal—that is, he had not beaten them, and he had provided for them according to his means and the customs of the country. Even the cross words that he had at times thought it his duty to address to them were generally mere sound and fury, and were tinged with a vein of good-nature that they thoroughly understood. Familiarity with events such as she was now experiencing had made her courageous, and had given her a degree of presence of mind in the face of danger that not one woman in a thousand naturally possesses, or

one in a hundred can acquire though the opportunities be innumerable.

Twenty years previously she had married Bosler. She was then the teacher of a primary school in Indiana, and knew enough to do her work to the satisfaction of the school committee, who did not know half as much as she did. Bosler was a respectable farmer, working a quarter-section of land in Kansas, and, meeting the girl while he was on a visit to his father and mother, fell in love with her at sight and carried her back with him to his farm. He was totally uneducated, loved whisky too much for his own good, as well as for the good of those with whom he came in contact, and, though never absolutely convicted as a rogue, was yet well known to be not over-scrupulous as to his ways and means of getting along in the world. His, moreover, was the stronger nature of the two, and so, little by little, his wife had become assimilated to him in her ways of thought, expression, and action. Soon after his marriage he had sold his farm, and ever since the two had been going west, keeping a little in advance of the current of civilization, and getting lower and lower in the social and moral scale, till now they had reached a point at which it seemed that further degradation was impossible. Drink had mainly been instrumental in making him what he was, but she had clung to him, hoping against hope, in a passive sort of a way, that something might occur to save him from the fate that she perceived was slowly but surely overtaking him, but yet never interfering, by word or deed, to arrest his course to destruction. No other person had come to do the work that she, at one time at least, might easily have done, and gradually she began to feel that she was becoming reconciled to the life she was leading. She had assumed his forms of speech; his ways—all but the drink—were getting to be her ways; she found excuses in her own mind for his lawless acts; she had even encour-

aged him in some of them, and, worst of all, she had brought up her own daughter to regard, not only without horror, but with admiration, the deeds of robbery and bloodshed that the head of the house was constantly committing. She had brought herself to the point of believing that horses and mules were the legitimate spoils of whoever could take them, and on several occasions had assisted her husband in his raids on his neighbors' stock. She even justified the taking of human life in which, in order to the accomplishment of his horse-thieving operations, he had sometimes been obliged to indulge. "For," as she said, "ef they'd let him alone Jim was as harmless as a babe, when he was after a hoss; but when they drawed on him it warn't in human natur' not to draw back."

It was true that, during his predatory excursions, Mr. Bosler was always as sober as a judge; no alcoholic liquor ever at these times passed his lips; and when not intoxicated he never quarreled with or attacked any one unless he was first threatened. But, when he had sold the proceeds of his depredations, he had, he thought, acquired the right to enjoy himself in the way that gave him the most pleasure, and then it was that he got drunk, and when he was drunk he was, as we have seen, a murderous beast. At such times, a word, a look, even the exhibition of a disposition to avoid him, was sufficient to excite in him the spirit of murder. To the extent of supporting him in this tendency Mrs. Bosler could not go. She felt the necessity of drawing the line somewhere, and she drew it at the point of the unprovoked, deliberate taking of human life. She knew that, but for whisky, her husband would be a comparatively quiet and inoffensive man, but she had never until quite recently ventured to remonstrate with him. Perhaps she was afraid that she might gain his ill-will if she attempted to interfere with him in his pursuit of happiness, and hence she had lamented in secret without dar-

ing to evince any open demonstrations of repugnance to his habits. Latterly, however, chiefly through the influence of her daughter, whose wits were keener and whose mental organization of altogether a stronger build than her own, she had made a few feeble efforts to induce her husband to forego the use of his accustomed beverage. Her success had not been such as to give her much encouragement, till the murder of Hallam was perpetrated. Since then, Mr. Bosler had apparently been touched by the persuasions of his wife joined to those of his daughter, and he had several times been almost brought to the point of "swearing off." Never before had he felt the death of any one of his victims so acutely as he had that of the last. Hallam was, as we have seen, a well-disposed young man that never gave intentional offense to any one, and the peculiarly cold-blooded way in which he had been killed had excited a very warm feeling against his murderer, the effect of which upon Mr. Bosler, conjoined with the spontaneous remorse he experienced, was such as to almost persuade him to yield to his wife's and daughter's solicitations, and to declare that never again should any intoxicating liquor pass down his throat. Perhaps the most powerful argument addressed to him was that which related to Lal's education. He admitted with more force than elegance that he would "rather see her layin' rottin' in her grave than to take up with any o' them fellows at The Cañon," and that she would eventually, if left to her own devices and those of the "boys," "take up" with some one or perhaps more of them, appeared to be accepted by him and Mrs. Bosler as a foregone conclusion. Mr. Bosler, however, had his own plans relative to his daughter's marriage, and he did not mean that they should be interfered with.

Lal already had several followers from among the fashionable young men of The Cañon, and already blood had been shed on her account. The most persistent of her ad-

mirers was a certain miner named Luke Kittle, otherwise known as "The Gulcher"—why or wherefore is lost in the antiquity of the region—and by that cognomen he was generally known among his friends. This gentleman was a sort of under-foreman in the Santa Constanza silver-mine, and in addition varied the tedious monotony of his occupation by keeping a monte-table, over the destinies of which he presided when work in the mine was over for the day, and on Sundays, when mining operations were either altogether suspended or carried on with a diminished force. On some accounts "The Gulcher" would have been as desirable a life-partner for Lal as could have been found at The Cañon. He always had plenty of money, dressed well and fashionably after his work in the mine was ended for the day, had the biggest gold watch and heaviest and most elaborately constructed watch-chain to be found anywhere in the region, and kept the most resplendent and best-frequented gambling establishment existing outside of Denver or Santa Fé. So strong were his claims and so powerful certain personal inducements offered by him that Mr. Bosler had, on several occasions, when in a generous mood from moderate potations, informed "The Gulcher" that "Lal was his'n whenever he was ready for her." But just as soon as the enlivening effects of the whisky had passed off he had hardened his heart and raised his price, and declared that "no Gulcher, nor the likes o' him, should ever tackle on to Lal." This vacillation of Mr. Bosler in the expression of his intentions had led to a coolness between him and Mr. Kittle, which was far from being assuaged by the comments of society at The Cañon, to the effect that "Bosler had gone back on his word," and that "The Gulcher" was "a good enough man for Lal Bosler any day." So great had been the pressure brought to bear, that Mr. Bosler was gradually weakening in his determination; not so much from any change in his own convictions, as from

the inability he experienced to maintain a continued resistance to the force of public opinion. Hence, whenever he thought of the matter, he cursed "The Gulcher" and himself for the existence of a claim that he had allowed to be established, and to which, though under existing circumstances abhorrent to him, he felt he should eventually be obliged to yield.

There were many objections to Mr. Kittle that any prudent and loving father would have been bound to take into consideration. In the first place, he was more or less full of bad whisky all the time that he was not on duty in the mine, and although "a fellow-feeling makes us wondrous kind," Mr. Bosler had enough practical experience of the effects of alcohol, when taken into the stomach, to know—when he himself was sober—that a man who was always under its influence was not likely to be a good son-in-law or husband. Secondly, "The Gulcher's" face had, by the premature explosion of a blast, been so effectively demolished that its appearance was scarcely that of a human being. The original effects of the dynamite had been of a sufficiently disfiguring character; but these were nothing in comparison with those due to the bungling procedures of the quack doctor called in to render surgical aid. This person had left unreduced a fracture of the lower jaw, and had inserted his stitches in such a way as to produce a degree of distortion which no explosive compound yet discovered could have equaled. Thirdly, "The Gulcher's" passion for Lal was so intense that he had declared, with sundry emphatic expletives, that unless she became his wife before the following New-Year's day, somebody would need the services of an undertaker. By this positive but at the same time rather indefinite threat, often and publicly repeated, several persons were kept in a state of annoyance altogether incompatible with that peace of mind constituting mental health. For, whether Mr. Kit-

tle referred to Mr. or Mrs. Bosler, to Lal, or to himself, he never condescended to explain. The idea that he might mean his sanguinary menace for one of the three Boslers made all of them uncomfortable. The suspicion that he might, in the event of a persistent refusal of his tender of marriage, perpetrate suicide, rendered many worthy citizens unhappy. For Mr. Kittle was a popular man, one highly esteemed, educated better than the mass of the people around him, and certain of political advancement if his life should be spared—a contingency always to be borne in mind at The Cañon. "The Gulcher" was a man of his word, and Lal had answered that she "would rather die than take up with Luke Kittle," so that the prospect of a catastrophe of some kind was imminent. Besides, Mr. Bosler had resolved in his own mind that, before the first of January came round, he would, as an act of self-protection, as well as a short and easy method of getting rid of his promise, embrace the first convenient opportunity of putting a bullet from his six-shooter into a vital part of "The Gulcher's" anatomy. It will be seen, therefore, that the situation was not without its difficulties, and that the happiest solution of the whole affair would be for Mr. Bosler to yield to his wife's and daughter's solicitations, turn their backs for good and all upon the whole region, and seek in a distant locality for that peace and quiet which The Cañon and its vicinity no longer afforded.

But there was another lover, who, if not so troublesome as "The Gulcher," was almost equally persistent in the manifestation of his attachment, and who, moreover, enjoyed the great advantage over his rival of being regarded with no indifferent feelings by the object of his affection. His name was Manuel Vaca, a New-Mexican, from the not distant town of Don Fernando de Taos, or plain "Taos," as it was generally called. This man was also well endowed with this world's goods, owning several ranches and many thou-

sand sheep. He had shown his devotion to Lal by stabbing the gentleman that had danced twice with her at a ball given to commemorate the birth of the Father of his Country on the last anniversary of that happy event, and that had been, in his turn, shot and seriously wounded by the too assiduous dancer, as soon as he had recovered from the effects of the knife-thrust he had received. Lal had been deeply touched by these evidences of the New-Mexican's infatuation, and was strongly disposed to favor his suit; but Mr. Bosler swore, with all that pointedness and emphasis he knew so well how to exhibit when occasion required, that "no darned nigger" should ever marry his daughter —a remark that went to show that, however good a judge of equine natural history Mr. Bosler might be, his anthropological knowledge was neither exact nor profound. Moreover, he had still further exhibited his contempt for his would-be son-in-law by running off that individual's horses to the number of about fifty, and selling them at The Cañon under his very nose! This was undoubtedly an audacious act, one that showed that Mr. Bosler was aware of the advantages he enjoyed as Lal's father. Nevertheless, Don Manuel, as he was called, though feeling compelled by the necessities of the situation to smother his wrath, swore by all the saints in the New-Mexican calendar, as well as by Our Lady of Guadalupe, that he would not only have Lal, by fair means or foul, but that he would get even with her father for his scurvy trick. Mr. Bosler had reason to believe, from the fact that Don Manuel made no secret of his feelings, as well as from Lal's known predilection for her New-Mexican lover, that that energetic and wronged person might not only attempt to do him serious bodily injury, but might concoct some scheme for abducting his daughter from the paternal protection.

It was true that Mr. Bosler had offered, for a certain consideration, to withdraw all opposition to Don Manuel,

notwithstanding his supposed state of ethnological degradation, but the Mexican had persistently rejected all such overtures, and had declared that his terms should be made with Lal, or with no one.

The two women had sat for nearly half an hour, anxiously expecting the signal, and yet no sign of the result of Mr. Bosler's reconnaissance had been received. They were beginning to feel some apprehensions for his personal safety, when suddenly a distant light flashed upon them, and a long-drawn-out whistle was heard. "Git up!" exclaimed Mrs. Bosler to the horses, at the same time laying the whip over their flanks. The animals sprang forward, judiciously restrained by their driver, and, after traversing a quarter of a mile or more of open prairie, were met by Mr. Bosler, who, taking them by the heads, conducted them to the spot where he had concluded to rest. "Git out, Moll—git out, Lal!" he said, with a good-natured laugh, "it's all right; but I thought it best to make sure. Thar's so many darned skunks in this world that a fellow's got to look out for 'em night and day."

"I don't see no house, Jim," said Mrs. Bosler, as she and Lal jumped to the ground.

"Well, ef you 'don't see no house, Jim,'" replied Mr. Bosler, mimicking his wife's words and tone, "it ain't my fault, is it? Thar's the ranch, right under your nose, in the shadow o' them trees."

Thus informed of its exact situation, Mrs. Bosler and Lal had no difficulty in discovering the cabin, which, as Mr. Bosler had remarked, stood so close to the wood that the shadows of the dense foliage prevented it being distinctly seen. In a short time, by the united efforts of the three, the wagon was unloaded, the furniture and baggage carried into the cabin, the horses unhitched, watered in the stream that flowed near the house, and picketed in the midst of the rich growth of buffalo-grass

that covered the prairie. Then preparations were made for supper.

The house was altogether a better one than that which Mr. Bosler had sold. It consisted of three large apartments, arranged *en suite*, but each opening exteriorly, as well as by communicating doors. It did not take long to empty the wagon of its contents, and to place them in the several rooms of the cabin. A few barrels and boxes that the former occupants had left behind them, served for tables and chairs, and ere long a savory meal of fried bacon, slapjacks, and coffee was prepared by the joint efforts of Mrs. Bosler and her daughter.

In the mean time, and all through the repast, Mr. Bosler was in a state of unusual hilarity. He had escaped the danger that was impending over him, and had secured a safe retreat for himself and family till such time as he could look around him, and make up his mind in regard to his future movements. He joked with Mrs. Bosler and Lal, and laughed uproariously when he thought he had made a more than commonly sharp remark about either of them.

"Now, Lal," he said, rubbing his hands together, while he lay back against the wall, after gulping down great mouthfuls of coffee, from a tin cup of the capacity of a quart, "you don't want to take up with none o' them Cañon fellows, when thar's a man around as I would be proud to see in the family." With which remark he winked at his wife, and chuckled, with a sense of his own humor.

But Lal was not disposed to participate in her father's joke. She made no reply, but her look warned Mr. Bosler that he was treading on dangerous ground. In his heart he was afraid of his daughter, for she had, upon several occasions, spoken her mind with great freedom, telling him some wholesome truths, with either the anger or pa-

thos necessary to impress him with a due sense of the reality of her convictions. He knew that she might now make an answer that would be sure to recall disagreeable associations. So he judged it best to let the subject drop, which he did, with the knowledge that his remark had thrown a damper over the spirits of the little party that would not be removed that night.

After supper—the rest of the meal having been passed in grim silence—preparations were made for going to bed. The light of the fire served for the two elder people, and Lal, lighting a candle and sticking it into the mouth of an empty bottle, went into the adjoining room. Her bed lay upon the floor. Her first work was to arrange it for occupancy, which was no difficult task, as its furniture consisted merely of a couple of blankets. Then she took from her pocket the little book that she had been reading in the wagon and carefully removed the paper that she had wrapped around it. She stood for several minutes looking admiringly at her treasure. It was bound in white vellum, very much embossed in gold. She turned it over and over, scanning it closely, and opening and shutting it with evident feelings of pleasure. She lingered long over the title-page, and, after studying it apparently without obtaining a clear idea of its significance, she closed the book, and, with an expression of keen disappointment on her face, laid it on the empty box turned upside down, which served as a table. Then she began to prepare for bed, but she was still preoccupied about the book, for, after removing her shoes and one stocking, she suspended further operations in the way of undressing, and, taking up the book, again resumed her inspection of the title-page, as if determined to persevere in the effort to solve its mysteries if it took all night for the purpose. She read it over repeatedly, with considerable difficulty as regarded some of the words, for the type was old-fashioned and looked strange to her not very prac-

ticed eyes. Eventually, however, arriving at the conclusion that she had mastered it, she replaced her treasure on the box. "The life of Count John, Tyscovicius of Biesk, in Podolia," she said, aloud. "I wonder what on earth a 'Tyscovicius' is? A mayor or sheriff, I suppose; and Count John was Tyscovicius of Biesk, in Podólia! Biesk, I guess, is a town, and Podolia, I s'pose, is a country. Tyscovicius! Why, that's something like the name of the man as bought our ranch. Oh, now I've got it!" she continued, laughing. "Wasn't I a stupid fool?" and, again opening the book, she read: "'The Life of Count John Tyscovicius, of Biesk, in Podolia.' That's him, I guess, or may be his father. No! Well I jist ain't got no sense for larnin'. This book was printed in one M, one V, one C, and two X's. That makes—O Lord! I don't know; but it's a long way back, that's sure; may be more'n a hundred years, I guess, and that's the reason it's sich hard readin'. But it's lively, for all that. I wonder will he miss it? I didn't steal it, that's sartin. A gal's got a right to what she finds. She ain't bound to run all round creation tryin' to find out a owner." Finally, having eased what little conscience she had relative to rights in property, she took off the remaining stocking, slipped out of her frock, let down her hair, which fell in black waves to her waist, and then, putting the candle on the floor, close to the pillow upon which her head was to lie, she got between the blankets. But, instead of going to sleep, she read from the little book far into the night, and until her candle sputtered in the neck of the extemporized candlestick, and went out, burned to its last end.

CHAPTER VIII.

"OUT OF THE DEPTHS."

THINGS went on in a monotonous kind of a way at Bighorn Spring, and Mr. Bosler began to feel the irksomeness of the situation, when, at the end of three or four days of separation from his friends at The Cañon, and of enforced abstinence from whisky—his supply of that beverage having become exhausted—he announced his intention of paying a visit of observation to the settlement. Besides, the stock of provisions was getting pretty low. And as it was probable that a week or two would elapse before he could complete his preparations for departing forever from the neighborhood, even should he determine upon that measure, it became necessary that the larder should be replenished.

In addition, there were several important business matters that required attention. There was a little piece of property, consisting of a house occupied as a "saloon," that he desired to sell, and for which he had already been offered a handsome price; there were a number of unadjusted accounts with receivers of animals he had stolen that it was expedient to settle; and, above all, there was the matter with "The Gulcher," relative to which he had determined to make a last effort toward a satisfactory adjustment.

But, although he felt obliged to make the journey, it was not without considerable apprehension for his personal safety that he bade his wife and daughter good-by, and,

jumping into his wagon, drove off to The Cañon. And this well-grounded fear was shared by the two women he left behind. Lal had begged hard to be allowed to go with him, feeling sure that her presence would be some safeguard from any attack that might be contemplated, but this he positively refused. "There ain't goin' to be no trouble," he said; "I kin always take care o' myself, and ef one o' them darned skunks *should* come down on me, I don't want no women around to bother me. All the sense I've got I want for the low-lived cusses." She was, therefore, obliged to abandon the idea, and her father, with a crack of his whip over his horses and a "Git up!" soon disappeared in the thick woods that skirted on every side the prairie on which the house stood.

For several minutes she remained standing at the door of the cabin, looking anxiously at the place where the wagon had disappeared in the timber, and shading her eyes with her hand to exclude the rays of the sun, not more than an hour high. Then, with a heavy sigh she entered her room and busied herself with some little details of dress, and of arrangement of the scanty furniture that seemed necessary. Mrs. Bosler was busy making a calico frock. There was nothing special for Lal to do, so she sat at the unglazed window, of which she had thrown back the solid shutter, and, taking her book from its paper wrappings, opened it and began to read.

She had done more that morning in the way of personal care than ever previously in her life. She had risen before the sun, and, moved by an impulse she had never yet experienced to a like extent, had plunged into a wide and deep pool formed by the water from Bighorn Spring, some hundred yards or so below its source. The water was cold, but the walk back had quickened her circulation, and she felt the warm glow and the exhilaration that people of strong constitutions and good health always feel after the

external application of cold water. Moreover, she was cleaner, and it was not often that Lal Bosler was in that condition that, whether next after or next before godliness, is certainly equally with it conducive to the development of the moral sentiments.

As neither her father nor mother had yet left their bed, Lal had walked up and down on the grass in front of the house, drying her hair in the warm sun, while at the same time she combed and brushed it as well as the rather imperfect instruments for the purpose that she owned would permit. She had put on shoes and stockings—another unusual circumstance—and, in addition, had donned a calico frock that, if of a glaring and antiquated pattern, both as regarded material and cut, was nevertheless clean. Having dried her hair, she fastened it up in a knot behind that was an unconscious and graceful imitation of a Greek maiden's coiffure, and then began to get breakfast ready. There was not much to do in this direction. A fire was readily made on the wide hearth of the middle room of the series; coffee, of a rather low degree of potency was boiled; a batch of dough, strongly impregnated with saleratus, was baked into a cake, and the everlasting bacon, fried in a skillet, in its own fat, completed the matutinal repast. In the mean time Mr. and Mrs. Bosler had left the conjugal couch, and, after partaking of breakfast, her father had, as we have seen, gone off on his excursion to The Cañon.

Lal had not been reading long in her seat by the open window, when she stopped suddenly, seemed for a few moments to be lost in reflection, and then closing the volume and wrapping it in its paper envelopes, she put it into the pocket of her frock, and went into the farthest room, where her mother was sitting, sewing.

Mrs. Bosler looked up as the girl approached, and regarded her with an affectionate expression on her not

uncomely face. It was now a sad face, and her eyes were red, as if from weeping. She was very fond of Lal, and the two were accustomed to exchange confidences, a habit encouraged by the long and repeated absences of the head of the house. At these times, Mrs. Bosler would talk freely of her own early life, of the education she had received, the offers of marriage she had rejected, and of the coming of Mr. Bosler, and her eventual surrender, after much skirmishing, to the assaults of that worthy man. "Ah, Lal!" she would say, "things was very different then. I knew lots o' things that has long sence passed clean out o' my mind. Laws bless you! I had parsed clean through Pollok's 'Course o' Time,' and I'd read Scott's novels, and Miss Edgeworth's tales, and 'Opie on Lyin',' and I'd the best class in Sunday-school as there was in Tippecanoe County. But now I never looks at a book once in a blue moon. Not as I don't care to, but how kin I, with your father gone more'n half the time, and me havin' to look after everything? Then, too, you see, my mind's always full o' somethin' else, as knocks all likin' for larnin' right out o' my head. But it wouldn't take much to bring it all back ef I only once had the chance."

"I've been readin', mam," said Lal, sitting down on an empty box turned on one side.

"Yes, I seen you the night we come over from the butte, and then ag'in two or three times sence. One o' them yeller-kivered books as Luke Kittle brought over from Hellbender, I s'pose?"

"No, mam, it's better nor any book as ever I seen afore, and thar ain't no murders, nor house-breakins', nor none o' them things in it neither—leastwise not yet," she added, doubtfully, "though things is beginnin' to look as ef thar's goin' to be hard times for some o' them."

"That's jist the way I was afore you was born. I read

'Lalla Rookh' all through in one night, and it took me so of a heap, that, when I come to give you a name, I called you Lalla, though you don't git but the half on it now from nobody; and I mought as well 'a' called you Lal in the start. Let's see your book."

Thus commanded, Lal took from her pocket the parcel she had just placed there, and, undoing it, produced the book from the perusal of which she had derived such intense satisfaction.

"Why, whar in heaven, Lal, did you git that?" exclaimed her mother, taking the little volume and examining it with critical eyes; "I never seen the like o' that afore! All covered with white and gold! Whar did you git it?"

"I found it, mam."

"You found it! Whar?"

"Well, while you, and pop, and the man as bought our ranch was talkin', I seen somethin' layin' in the grass, jist alongside the hitchin'-post; somethin' shinin' in the sun. I picked it up, and that's it."

"But it belongs to the man."

"Yes," doubtfully.

"It's not yours."

"No," still more doubtfully; "but I s'pose findin's is keepin's, ain't they?" This with more decision.

Mrs. Bosler stopped to reflect before answering the apposite question proposed by her daughter. In the peculiar system of morality existing in the Bosler family relative to horses and mules, possession was all the points of the law, no matter how the tenure was brought about. For many years Mrs. Bosler had tacitly, if not overtly, countenanced that doctrine, while her husband had confirmed it with many emphatic and convincing arguments. At first, she had tried in her small, weak, and vacillating way, to combat the views relative to horse-stealing that Mr. Bosler

brought forward. But, as is generally the case when interest, or at least apparent interest, is on the side of the specious pleader for wrong-doing, when the most fallacious reasoning is addressed to minds of little force, her scruples had been gradually undermined, and she had, at last, been brought to give her countenance to acts that, when she was a school-teacher in Tippecanoe County, Indiana, would have filled her with horror. But, for some little time past, a change had been gradually taking place in Mrs. Bosler's moral sentiments. An awakening from the torpor of nearly twenty years had, almost imperceptibly to herself, taken place. She was beginning to look further into the future than she had hitherto cared to pry, and to ask herself questions relative to what was before her husband, herself, and especially Lal, the answers to which moved the very depths of her heart. For, though she was markedly deficient in force of intellect and in will-power, she was a woman whose emotions, when once aroused, were almost always of a noble character. She often concealed them, too. She was of the kind that can suffer patiently for years, when passion, or even a milder feeling scarcely rising to the force or dignity of passion, prompts to self-abnegation. Now, she had a prospect of leaving the semi-barbarous regions in which twenty years of her life had been spent, and of taking up her abode in some quiet place, where horse-stealing would not be considered one of the manly virtues, or be the source whence her daily bread was derived; where her husband's life would cease to hang by a thread, and where Lal would have those advantages in the way of education and society from which she had, ever since her birth, been debarred. The prospect thus opened to her contemplation was a source of joy far exceeding any that her hard existence had yet experienced. It had turned her thoughts inward, had given them a new direction, had assimilated them, in part, to what they would be should her hopes be realized. Lal's

question set her to thinking as she had not thought before in years. Here was the chance to give the girl her first lesson in the new system of ethics that would prevail when the anticipated social changes should be effected! Here was the opportunity to plant the seed that, in time, under new auspices, and through the influence of right teaching, would develop into a pure symmetrical growth, regenerating, refining, and enriching the soil in which it flourished. But there was another point to be considered. Lal, she knew, possessed a mind that, though unformed and impulsive in its tendencies, was yet in its processes often forcibly if roughly logical. Mrs. Bosler had never said a word to her calculated to make her think badly of her father. How, then, could she blame the girl for appropriating a book that did not belong to her; stealing it, in fact, and yet not condemn the still greater crimes that her father had perpetrated almost every day of his life? What would be the next question the girl would ask if she told her the book was not hers, and that she was guilty of the crime of petty larceny, and of the sin of violating the eighth commandment? She knew in her heart what it would be. She could almost see Lal's lips move as the words came out of her mouth. She could almost hear them as with awful distinctness they fell on her ears: "Ef the book isn't mine, I don't see how hosses is father's." That is what she would say; and the words would be spoken with a degree of scorn, and a sense of outraged right, that had often before marked Lal's speech. What could she reply? How could she put the girl on the right track without condemning with irresistible force lapses from virtue of which her father was so often guilty? The food she ate came from the proceeds of thefts; the clothes she wore on her back were procured with money paid to her husband for animals he had stolen; the material of the very frock she was now making had been given in exchange for a mule that he had taken

in the night from its owner's stable. No; the logic of events was against her. She could not give the lesson now; the sower was not yet ready to cast the seed. She could not look her daughter in the face and tell her to be honest, and meet that daughter's half-inquiring, half-condemning gaze, and hear the words she knew would be spoken. She hesitated; she was silent.

A struggle of a far different character was going on in Lal's mind. She sat in silence, her head dropping on her breast, her eyes filled with those quiet tears that come to all, men or women, children or adults that feel deeply. Then she raised her face and looked anxiously and searchingly into her mother's eyes.

"Mam," she said at last in the clear tone that showed how she had controlled her feelings. "I've been readin' somethin' in that book that has kind o' sot me thinkin'. I've thought a little at times in the same way, but not much, mam, for you see things goes here all in one way, and thar ain't nothin' to keep you different from what's goin' on. I've read somethin' here that I guess has fixed me. The book ain't mine; I stole it. I knowed I was stealin' it when I picked it up and hid it under my shawl, and I'm goin' to take it back this very day, ef I walk all the way to the butte on my bended knees. I don't quite like that man, though he was kind to me onst. He looks so hard, and he mought send me to jail; but the book's his'n, and he's got to have it afore the sun goes down tonight."

For a moment Mrs. Bosler looked as though she were stunned, then she broke down.

"O Lal! oh, my darling!" she cried, throwing her arms around the girl and bursting into a passion of tears, while she unconsciously resumed the manner of speech of her own early life. "God has set you right when I—I, your mother—have let you grow up in sin and shame all

through your young days—till now I believe, my heart is almost broken."

"No—no, mam, you couldn't help it," exclaimed Lal, as she clasped her mother's face in her hands while the tears, no longer restrained, ran like rain down her cheek. "Haven't I seen how you was fixed, and how you was strugglin' betwixt father and me? I never knowed nothin' sure, till I read that book. And didn't I want to stay at the butte and fight it out when you was wantin' to git away? You're a deal better nor me, mam."

"It is all my fault," replied Mrs. Bosler. "You have never been told what was right and what was wrong, while I knew, and might at first have stopped it all if I hadn't been a wicked woman."

"Don't you go on so, mam; it's no fault of your'n. We're goin' away, and things will be different for you and me and father. I know I ain't worth much, and the blame's more on me than you, but ef it hadn't bin for you, mam, I guess I'd 'a' bin a—" she paused for a moment, and then continued—"much worse. Oh, you don't know how bad as I'd 'a' bin, ef I hadn't heard you cryin' and moanin' one night when father was away. But I'm not as bad as some of the gals at The Cañon, am I, mam?" kissing her mother as she spoke, and putting an infinite tenderness into her voice.

"Oh, no, dear! and the glory is all your own for what you are not; the shame all mine for what you are.

"It might have been different," she continued, after a pause, while she still held Lal's head tight against her breast, "if I had done my duty to your father and you. But I was so weak—oh, so shamefully weak—and I let the sin come in little by little without a word of rebuke, when, if I had spoken that word, it would have fled away forever; and now—O my God!—how can I see my way through

all the darkness that is before me, and how can I atone for the wickedness of the past?"

"We won't talk about it any more, mam. It'll all come right."

"No—no; it can never come right, for, Lal, I feel as if we had seen your father for the last time. When he drove into the timber this morning, I stood at the door and watched him till he disappeared, and then I felt that we should never see him again. Yes, Lal, I know that he has gone, never to return, and I know that but for me he might have been a good man, with no reason for any one to do him harm."

"Don't you talk like that, mam; cheer up! Pop ain't no fool. He knows what he's about, and he ain't goin' to run no resks. Oh, he's as sharp as the rest on 'em when he's on the road, and the man as catches him sleepin' has got to git up airly. Now you stop cryin', for I've got to go right away, and I don't like to leave you all alone when you feel like that."

"Must you go now, Lal? Can't you wait till to-morrow?"

"No, not a minute! The book's his'n, and I've got to take it back right away. I sha'n't be gone long, unless he claps me in jail. I'll take the short cut over the hill, and down the Little Cañon, and I'll be back 'most afore you know I've gone, ef he lets me."

Mrs. Bosler had stopped weeping, and was drying her eyes on her apron. "Perhaps you're right, Lal," she said, falling with the disappearance of her emotion into her usual way of speaking; "as you say, the book's his'n, and he ought to have it jist as soon as your legs can carry you to the butte."

"It's a good book," said Lal, reflectively, as she took the volume in her hands and wrapped it carefully in its paper coverings. "There's somethin' here as sot me think-

in'. It's about a gal as found a diamond ring on the ice whar she war skatin'. It jist fit her finger, and she'd been wantin' a ring like that for a long time. A lady, as lost it, come back to look for it, and she asked the gal if she'd seen anything of a ring layin' about thar on the ice. The gal had the ring in her pocket, but she said as how she hadn't seen no ring nowhar. Then the lady went home. She was the sister of the man as the book's about, and they was both moughtily cut up about losin' the ring, for you see it had belonged to about a dozen or more grandmothers one after the other, and was worth lots o' money besides. But that night, when they was all asleep in their beds, they heard a loud ringin' of the bell at the gate, and it ringed so loud that all the folks in the castle was woke up. And when they opened the gate thar stood the gal, and she said as how she wanted to speak to the lady. Well, they took her up to the lady, and then she falls on her knees and holds out the ring, and says: 'I'm a wicked gal, for I found this ring and put it in my pocket, and I meant to keep it, and I lied when you asked me about it. But when I went home I got to thinkin', and when I went to bed I couldn't sleep, for I knowed I was a thief. The ring was on the table, and the light o' the moon was shinin' on it, and it looked jist like the eye of a devil, and, whether I shet my eyes or covered up my head in the bedclothes, thar was the eye a-starin' me in the face. I couldn't stand it no longer, so here's the ring, and I'm ready to go to prison or to be killed, jist as you please.'

"Then the lady was very mad, and she called to the police to take the gal and load her with chains, and put her in jail, so that in a few days her head mought be cut off for stealin' from a great lady. But the man that the book's about, said: 'No! if we put this gal in prison and cut off her head, we'll spile a body as God made, and take away a soul from the world as may do good some time or

'nother, and good souls is scarce in these parts.' So he begged his sister to forgive her, which she done, very much aginst her will. Then he sent the gal home, and give her books to read, and learnt her lots o' things that edicated her, and made another kind of a gal of her. And she growed up, and got to be a saint, or somethin' o' that sort, and worked in the hospitals and jails a-helpin' the sick and the prisoners to be good and happy. Then she died many years after, and the king and queen come to her burial, and they put a monument over her as said on it as she was the kindest and the best woman as had ever lived in them parts.

"It's a long story, mam, but it's the thing as fixed me. I ain't very different from that gal, and she was a thief. I'm bound to take the book back, for I'm jist sure, ef I'd keep it another night, I'd see it shinin' in the dark with 'thief' in big letters on the kiver! Ef he wants to put me in jail I'm willin' to go, and I guess he's a hard man; but it's right for me to go and let him do as he likes; and when I git out I guess I'll be a better gal, and I'll know that what's another's ain't mine."

"He won't put you in jail, for thar ain't no jail 'cept in Hellbender, and he won't bother to go over thar jist to lock you up. But I can't see as he's a hard man."

"I ain't so sure about that; but I think he'd do what he thought was right, ef he had to take me thar himself. He may be a good man, but I never seen one like him afore, and he's kind o' new to me. That's why I don't like him, jist because I don't know him; but I promised to be his friend, and I will, too, for he was good to me; but, somehow, I don't like him. I guess I'm afeard of him."

"That's when you was talkin' to him jist afore we started from the butte?" inquired Mrs. Bosler.

"Yes; I asked him ef any one come to run off his hosses not to fire to kill; for you see what I was after."

"And did he promise?"

"Yes, but it went ag'in his grain. He didn't want to. He said as how he only promised because o' me, and that's why I said I'd be his friend ef ever he wanted one; but he'd jist as soon kill a man as not ef he thought it was right."

Lal went to her own room to make preparations for her journey to the butte, but returned in a few minutes equipped for the expedition. The only addition to her dress was a thick shawl that she had thrown over her head and shoulders. Mrs. Bosler was still sewing on her frock.

"Good-by, mam," said Lal, as she entered the room. "Thar's only one thing more as I'd like to know about afore I go, and that's Luke Kittle. You know father told him I'd marry him, and that he'd make me do it ef I wouldn't o' my own free-will. In course, he never knowed what he was sayin', and it was all-fired mean o' Luke Kittle to hold him to it. But I ain't goin' to marry him, never! No!" she continued, with vehemence, "not ef all the world was to beg me, and they'd all die ef I didn't!"

"I don't think it'll come to that," said Mrs. Bosler, stopping her work for the moment. "I had a talk with your father last night, and we agreed as 'twas best for him to see Luke Kittle, and try and settle things without no muss."

"I'll never marry him!" repeated Lal, with all the energy of which she was capable.

"But he may kill your father ef you don't."

"Let him!" repeated the girl, savagely. "Ef father drinks whisky and trades me off to a man like Luke Kittle he mought jist as well be killed as not."

"O Lal, don't talk like that! You wouldn't let your father be killed."

"I would!" exclaimed Lal, her eyes flashing, her head thrown back, her form erect, her whole attitude one of defiance and concentrated anger. "I'd see him, father o' mine as he is, dead at my feet afore I'd marry Luke Kittle! Why don't father kill him, ef he wants to keep me from marryin' him, as he says he does? He's killed men afore this, and for less too, I guess. What's about Luke Kittle as he can't be killed, I'd like to know?"

Mrs. Bosler was terrified at the violence of the explosion. She sat without endeavoring to stay the force of Lal's eloquence, and even when the girl ceased, and sat down exhausted with the emotional strain to which she had subjected herself, Mrs. Bosler dared not open her mouth to speak, for fear of a repetition of her daughter's ungovernable excitement. But it did not take long for Lal to become cool. As in other high-strung natures, the duration of her rage was in inverse proportion to its violence. She saw that her mother was appalled by what she had said, and the manner in which she had said it. To make amends for a fault she had committed was a strong point in Lal's mental organization; and, besides, she was going away, and if she had to go to jail, might not see her mother again for many months.

"Good-by," mam, she repeated, going over to where Mrs. Bosler sat in a state of semi-stupefaction, and, putting her arms around her neck; "don't you mind me! I'm as bad as the rest on 'em, I guess."

"It's all right. You ain't got no reason to marry Luke Kittle, but we won't talk about it now. Good-by," kissing her daughter's cheek, which was now flushed with the reaction, for Lal was one of those persons that get pale when angry and red when the paroxysm has passed off. "Go, now, and take back the book. Then you'll feel cl'ar in your own mind, even ef you have to go to prison. Oh, my darling, my Lal! There's good in your heart yet," she con-

tinued, using again the form of speech of her early days—"you are stronger and better than your mother, and God will take care of you in his own way, and for his own ends—go, Lal," kissing her as she spoke; "God guide you and send you back safe to me with your heart purer and happier, and you knowing that you're doing right, even if you do have to go to jail first!"

CHAPTER IX.

"JOHN BURIDAN'S ASS."

"YOU speak so kindly," said Tyscovus to the gentleman in the gig, "that I am tempted to ask your advice and assistance in a matter of great importance to me—one in which I have unintentionally committed an awful act. I have just killed a man, and his dead body is lying on the floor of my house."

"You've killed a man! Is that all? Now, my friend, if you had been as long in this country as I have, you would know that you have, even under the worst possible circumstances, perpetrated a venial offense. If you had stolen a horse, now, and been caught, you would probably hang for it; but as to murder, it's nothing."

"That is a bad state of affairs. In my country the killing of a man, by any one not a Russian soldier or a policeman, is a serious crime."

"Whether homicide is crime or not, depends altogether on the attendant cirumstances. The mere fact that you have killed a man, need not cause remorse, or excite apprehensions for your personal safety. You may have done a very righteous deed, killing your man in self-defense, or in the line of your duty; or a blameless one, killing him by misadventure or accident. I am sure I have killed a good many in my time—men, women and children—and I don't reproach myself either, for I was trying to save their lives. Only a few days ago, a man had a terrible injury of the elbow-joint. The examination to discover the extent

of the damage would have caused an immense amount of suffering, if conducted without an anæsthetic. I determined to give him chloroform, and, finding his heart and lungs in apparently good condition, I began causing him to inhale it. But hardly had he taken two or three whiffs of it when he gave a great gasp, turned over on his side and ceased to breathe. All efforts at resuscitation were futile. He was dead. Of course, I felt the proper amount of regret for the poor fellow's death; but I had done my best, and I did not therefore go round lamenting that I had killed a man. He died from causes that could not have been foreseen. As you know now, I am a physician, Doctor Willis, of Hellbender." Tyscovus bowed, and the two men shook hands.

"My name is Tyscovus," he said. "I bought the place owned by a Mr. Bosler, back here on the butte. About an hour ago a man knocked at my door and insisted on entering when I did not wish to be interrupted. I rushed at him without stopping to inquire who he was or what he wanted. We had a severe scuffle, without either of us speaking a word; when suddenly, as I was getting the better of him, he ceased to struggle, his grasp of me relaxed, and I found that he was dead. Certainly, nothing that I did to him killed him, but, for all that, he is as much of a corpse as any I ever saw."

"I have already heard of you, Mr. Tyscovus," said the doctor, smiling, "from some friends of mine that paid you a very unceremonious visit last night. They said you were as plucky as a fighting-cock, and as good-natured as an Alderney cow. But about your man. Are you quite sure he is dead? He may only have fainted."

"No, he is dead. He did not breathe, and the pulse had quite stopped beating. I dragged the body into the room, locked the door, and immediately came away to give myself up for trial."

"Pooh, pooh! you shall not do anything of the kind. Come! I am going past your place; jump into the gig and we will see about this. Perhaps he is not dead, after all, and then my services may be of use to him."

"You are very kind," said Tyscovus, getting into the vehicle and occupying the vacant seat by the side of the doctor. "Your plan is certainly the best that can be followed, but I am quite sure you will find the man dead, and even cold by this time."

"What sort of a looking man was the fellow?"

"Rather tall, and stoutly built, black hair, beard, and eyes."

"Ha! ha! there are dozens like him about here. How was he dressed?"

"In a red-flannel shirt, and dark-blue trousers tucked into high-top boots."

"Very good; I've seen fifty dressed in similar costume to-day. But were there no special features about his person or attire that attracted your attention?"

"No," answered Tyscovus, musingly, "I think not, yes," he added, after a pause, "I noticed that, though he was a comparatively young man, he had lost all his front teeth."

"Ah! If he is the man I am thinking of, they were knocked down his throat about a month ago by a blow from the handle of a revolver. But did you notice nothing else? No peculiarity of build? You might have seen what I have in my mind, when you were laying him out on your floor."

"I noticed nothing, unless it may have been the extraordinary length of his arms."

"That's it; that's the point to which I refer," interrupted the doctor; "he has the longest arms of any man I ever saw, and he goes by the nickname of 'The Monkey,' on account of this anatomical feature. He is the biggest

rascal, with one exception, to be found between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, and you know that is saying a great deal. I hope you have really killed him. If so, you have either saved the county the expense of hanging him, or the vigilance committee the trouble of hunting him up, and performing that very proper operation. But I am afraid there is no such good luck in store for us. I think I know what has happened; however, we shall soon see."

The conversation was continued till, arriving at the foot of the butte, it was decided to picket the animals on the prairie, while the two gentlemen ascended the height on foot.

Entering the covered passage-way of the cabin, the first thing that met the astonished gaze of the owner was the wide-open door of the room in which he had left the supposed corpse. This prepared him for what was to follow. The apartment was empty—empty not only of the body which, imagining it to be lifeless, Tyscovus had laid out so carefully on the floor, but of everything in the way of clothing, books, papers, and other things, which were of a portable character and worth stealing. The five ten-dollar gold-pieces, which Mr. Higgins had so confidingly laid on the table had also disappeared, as well as the manuscript upon which Tyscovus had been engaged when the interruption to his literary labors occurred.

To say that Tyscovus was astonished at what had happened, would very inadequately express the state of his feelings. For a moment he was speechless, as he looked around the room and missed various articles of his property, and could scarcely believe in the reality of the apparent circumstances. Then he turned toward the doctor, who all the time had been silently watching the expression of Tyscovus's face, having seemingly, to judge by his entire composure, arrived at a satisfactory explanation of the state of affairs.

"It is just as I expected," he said, in answer to Tyscovus's inquiring and puzzled expression; "you have had a visit from the most thorough-paced villain in this Territory, with one exception, as I remarked before; one who stops at nothing that his great strength and audacity permit him to accomplish, and whose power for evil-doing is only limited by the fact that he is subject to a disease of the heart that, on occasions of great mental or physical excitement, deprives him of consciousness. His name is Abe Wilkins, *alias* 'The Monkey.' Doubtless, he came here to rob you, for he prefers stealing by force and violence, than secretly or by stratagem, when he can have a choice in the matter."

"And then he recovered, and went off with my property?"

"Yes, that is exactly what he has done, the scoundrel! If you had opened the door to him, or had allowed him to burst it open, he would have seized you by the throat, have pinioned you, and then have proceeded leisurely to rob you of all your possessions to which he might have taken a fancy. If he had killed you he would not have cared, though he does not especially desire to kill his victims."

"My over-conscientiousness saved his life. If I had not gone to deliver myself up to the authorities, I should have found him out, and then I should have killed *him*."

"Or he would have killed you, as he would probably have done in the beginning but for the fact that your vigorous assault took him entirely by surprise, and a paroxysm of his heart-disease put him *hors de combat* and gave you the victory. But for that he would certainly have overcome you in the struggle, for he is of twice your weight and strength, and as active as a wild-cat. I have seen him in a couple of his attacks, and eventually they will kill him. Did you have any money here?"

"Yes, I had two hundred and fifty dollars in gold in

my knapsack, and fifty here on the table. The latter is, I see, gone, and I suppose the other is also. Yes," he continued, after merely for form's sake searching in the now empty knapsack, "he has cleaned me out as completely as a cloud of seven-year locusts cleans out a wheat-field. The money I can easily replace, but the loss of my books and papers will, I fear, cause me a great deal of trouble, and may be irremediable."

"I suppose," said the doctor, "there will be no great difficulty in getting them back by negotiation. Those fellows will always come to terms, and in this case the books and papers can be of no use to him except as means of extorting money from you. In a few days you will probably hear from him, with an offer to return them on the receipt of a certain sum of no modest amount. Then your diplomatic talents will become of service to you. Now," he continued, approaching Tyscovus and laying his broad hands on his shoulders, "I like you; you are here alone, with nothing but four bare walls to keep you company, and no human habitation within five miles of you in any direction. Your baggage will not reach you till the day after to-morrow. Come and stay with me, at least till it arrives. I am going to The Cañon to see a patient, and will be back this way in a couple of hours, at farthest. Don't say No," he went on, seeing that Tyscovus was on the point of declining his invitation; "my daughter, who keeps house for me, is tired of her old father and wants other society. You will be quite a godsend to us both."

"I do not think I can go," said Tyscovus. "I came here for solitude. Thus far I have failed lamentably in the object of my search, but, now that I have nothing more to be stolen, perhaps I shall be let alone."

"But you have nothing to eat?"

"True, I have nothing to eat; but there is my book, the work upon which so much depends."

"My dear fellow, you can't eat your book, and you can't write it either without pen, ink, paper, or notes. Don't you see that 'The Monkey' has carried off everything?"

"I can at least practice myself in getting used to solitude."

"And starve while doing it. By the time you accustom yourself to the isolation to which you will be subjected, you will be dead."

"I have no clothes to wear that are fit for the presence of ladies."

"I'll lend you all you want," replied the doctor, laughing, as he looked at his own burly figure and Tyscovus's slim body. "Besides, your baggage will be at Hellbender to-morrow, and you can then have your own things; and, again, there are plenty of clothiers in the town who will supply you with all you want; and, as to money, my bank account is at your service; so you see there is no escape."

"I feel that I ought not to accept your kind invitation, and yet I want to go. I am more than ever 'John Buridan's Ass.'"

"What?"

"'John Buridan's Ass.' My father, who was a scholar, and very appreciative of his son's character, gave me that name when I was a boy, and it stuck to me in our family till I became a man. I am going to resume it; for my asinine qualities are becoming better developed every day of my life."

"My dear fellow, you excite my curiosity. I never heard of John Buridan or of his ass. Won't you take the trouble to explain to me the *rationale* of so remarkable an appellation being given to you? How did 'John Buridan's Ass' differ from any other ass? And why are you like that animal?"

Tyscovus laughed as he answered: "I am not at all

astonished at any one's ignorance of the subject. I should certainly know nothing about it, but for the fact that the name was given to me. My father, like others of my ancestors, was inclined to theological studies, and among the works he dipped into were those of John Buridan, a school-man of the fourteenth century. This disputant, who appears to have had a tendency to the use of the *reductio ad absurdum,* proposed this problem to those who denied the existence of free-will in man: 'Suppose,' said he, 'that there is an ass who is equally hungry and thirsty, each appetite acting upon him to exactly the same extent; and suppose he has a trough of water on one side of him, and on the other, at the same distance and relative situation, a bundle of hay of like size with the trough of water. Now, which will he take first, the water or the hay?' Of course, if it was answered that he would take either one or the other first, John Buridan replied, 'Then the ass has free-will; he is free to choose, and, if an ass, how much more a man!' If the answer was that 'he would take neither, for that, being equally affected by the two substances and appetites, neither could predominate so as to influence him,' Buridan had his opportunity to apply the *reductio ad absurdum* by asking if it was to be supposed that an ass so situated would die of hunger and thirst. Now, as I was always wanting more facts and proofs before I could make up my mind to act in matters which required deliberation, my father dubbed me 'John Buridan's Ass,' alleging that I lacked the power to decide in all subjects of importance."

"It's all very funny, and very interesting," said the doctor, laughing heartily, "but was that your true character?"

"I think it was, but by long and severe discipline I think—I am sure—I overcame the indecision, which was most notable failing. Probably, too, I was assisted in

my efforts by the fact that it was only a youthful trait. The boy is not always father to the man."

"I don't think the name is fairly applicable to you now; but if you don't make up your mind quickly to come with me I shall change my opinion and agree with your father. Don't let the story go abroad here, for, with the tendency of the people to apply nicknames, they will certainly call you 'The Ass,' and the cognomen would not be flattering to your mental powers. But, come! decide, for I must be off. Say 'Yes,' and I'll stop for you at the foot of the butte and take you home to a good, hot supper, a glass of cognac, and a real Havana that will take out of you what little asininity is left."

"I'll go," said Tyscovus, fairly overpowered by the doctor's arguments and entreaties. "You are so kind that I can not resist; but I know I shall never be able to repay your hospitality, for I am obliged to work, and work in solitude, too."

"Oh, yes, you will! After you get settled here I'll come down occasionally and stay with you overnight. I am fond of talking, as you may have noticed, and I am inclined to think you can teach me many things I want to know. As to solitude, we shall see. It's my deliberate opinion that the one spark of weakness in your composition is your tendency to solitude. I shall cure you. Be on the watch for me in two hours from now, and meet me at the foot of the butte." So saying, the doctor, without waiting for an answer from Tyscovus, jumped into his gig with as much agility as his portly form permitted and was driving off, when Tyscovus called to him.

"You spoke twice of an exception to your statement that Wilkins is the worst man in the Territory. Please tell me whom you regard as pre-eminently wicked."

"Why, Jim Bosler, of course," said the doctor, as he drove off—"the man from whom you bought this place.

He stole my blooded mare a few nights ago, and is altogether the most unmitigated ruffian, thief, and murderer I ever saw."

"I thought he was the man you meant. Good-by. I'll meet you at the foot of the hill, with many thanks for your thoughtfulness."

CHAPTER X.

A WONDERFUL WOMAN.

THE doctor drove away to The Cañon on his errand of mercy, and Tyscovus re-entered his despoiled mansion. Everything seemed to be against him. He began to get an inkling of the difficulties he would be obliged to surmount, and to fear that they might be of so grave a character as to be beyond his power to master them. The solitude of which he had come in search appeared to be getting farther and farther away from him. He was forming relationships which would inevitably, if not soon broken, separate him from his work and indispose his mind to that concentration which was so necessary to the successful accomplishment of his task. To think, as he was at present situated, was an impossibility. Vexations and interruptions to a degree he had scarcely ever before experienced had come upon him, forcing his thoughts into incongruous channels, and driving from his mind the ideas which, if he was to gain his ends, must reign supreme and alone. Had he been less determined, less interested in his object, he would then and there, once and for all, have abandoned his undertaking, and have let himself drift along without resistance wherever the current might carry him. Perhaps, after all, this would be the better course for one whose chief purpose in life could only be fully attained by the study of human nature. And here, where mankind was exhibiting itself in phases and traits of which heretofore he had had no experience, what a vast field lay before him, in all its pris-

tine freshness, ready for his investigations! His was to be a cosmopolitan work, and yet all the personal knowledge he had of its fundamental principles was derived from the study of humanity as it existed under one of the most restricted and artificial systems in all the world. Had he ever before encountered such a man as Jim Bosler, or such another as Abe Wilkins? Such a woman as Mrs. Bosler, such a girl as Lal? And of these people he hardly knew anything beyond the superficial characteristics which they displayed to all with whom they came in contact. What a mine of wealth there might be in all of them, if he would only take the trouble to look for it! What new lights would be thrown on labors that were to reconstruct society if he could only have three or four people to study in all the varied moods into which the peculiar circumstances of their lives were continually throwing them! And then, such study could scarcely fail to bring him into association, or at least contact, with many other individuals living under conditions of existence to which he had heretofore been a stranger, and hence presenting mental and physical characteristics of which he had as yet no positive knowledge. True, he had read books of travel and novels in which the anthropological social type with which he was now brought into relation was more or less perfectly described; but his very limited acquaintance with it had been amply sufficient to show him that the descriptions had lacked that fidelity to nature which he had all his life so assiduously cultivated in his investigations. The idea to which he had arrived, that his studies of human nature were complete, that his store of facts was ample, had suddenly—by two or three what, to that region, were commonplace events—been forcibly knocked out of his head. He had read of such men as Jim Bosler, but no description could take the place of the living acquaintanceship with a man the like of whom did not exist in all Europe. He had met, in his readings, with

many accounts of vigilance committees, but the half-hour's contact with the men who invaded his premises the night of his arrival had given him insights of which he had never dreamed. And there were Mr. Higgins, and Abe Wilkins, and even the doctor—were they not all individualities, the like of which had never occurred to his mind?

And Lal Bosler? He had not thought much of her, but every time the memory of her pleading with him for what might be her father's life, the earnest look of her eyes, the melodious tenderness of her voice, the agonized expression on her face, flashed across his mind, his interest deepened, and he reproached himself for not having recognized at once, that, in spite of her uncouth speech, her low moral status, the squalor of her surroundings, her ignorance of every artificial refinement, and of the most commonplace learning, there was, perhaps, something in her worth the effort to develop, and which, when once brought out to the light of noble influences, would purify every other faculty of her mental being. How much better to save one such soul as that of the horse-thief's daughter, than to spend years upon a book which, when finished, might never have a dozen readers!

"But no," he thought, after he had walked the floor for over an hour, considering the various points of his situation. "I have been here but twenty-four hours. To change all my well-laid plans and thoroughly worked-out system of study, the results of years of reflection and labor, for any cause that a single day should bring forth, would be an act of the most unspeakable folly, worthy of an ass of less reputation than John Buridan's. I have made the great mistake of beginning too soon. I shall wait now till my wagon arrives and I am comfortably established, before I again put pen to paper or even think of my work. Then, I shall let every one know that I wish to be alone. I shall insert a notice to that effect in the newspapers at Hell-

bender and The Cañon; put a placard with a like intimation at the foot of the butte, and, if necessary, get a couple of blood-hounds or other savage dogs to guard the premises. People will then understand that I mean what I say, and then I shall show what power for work is in me."

With his hands clasped behind him and his head bent upon his chest, as was his wont when his mind was intently occupied, he continued to pace the floor, unconscious of the lapse of time, until suddenly the idea struck him to look at his watch, when he found that already the two hours that the doctor expected to be absent had passed. He went out on the plateau and looked down the road that led to The Cañon, and ere long he saw the doctor's gig coming as rapidly as a pair of fast trotters could bring it. Without shutting a door of the house, which now contained nothing of the least value, he descended the butte and joined his newly-found friend.

"It's rather a dangerous piece of business for any one but a physician to visit The Cañon," said the doctor, as they drove along. "Several times it has happened that people from Hellbender, who were well mounted, have been followed out of town by one or more of the horse-thieves who infest that place and robbed of their animals. They rarely, however, treat a doctor with any such disrespect. Jim Bosler is the only one of them who ever plied his vocation on me."

"Such things are very strange to me," said Tyscovus. "I don't understand why such scoundrels are not cut short in their careers by the officers of the law. You have all the machinery of justice here—courts, judges, sheriffs—and good laws under which they can be set in motion. Why, then, is such lawlessness permitted to exist, and why are private organizations, like your vigilance committee, allowed to take the law into their hands and execute justice, or rather vengeance?"

"I'll tell you," answered the doctor. "If any one of the outlaws should be seen within the limits of Hellbender, he would be shot down at once, or arrested before he had gone fifty yards; but they take good care to keep out of the way, and to live in a place that is made up of them and their friends. It would be impossible for any force, less than a company of soldiers, to take Bosler or Wilkins from The Cañon, unless it were done by stratagem. Then, even in case of arrest, there would be the formality of a trial, and the strong probability that, either through perjured evidence, or a sympathizing friend or two on the jury, a failure to convict would follow. You see the officers of the law must act according to law. Their hands are in a measure tied. They can not proceed to the extremity of shooting such rascals down, unless they are caught in the commission of some unlawful act, and they take devilish good care not to be caught. A sheriff or his deputy armed with a warrant for the arrest of one of these fellows, would either be waylaid and killed, or shot down, should he attempt to serve it. They are banded together for self-protection, and know just when warrants are issued, and to whom they are committed for service. The only way to meet them is for the law-abiding portions of the community to fight them with their own weapons. Hence, a vigilance committee, a portion of which paid you so untimely a visit last night, is organized. It has no fine-spun scruples; but though it has often acted, it has never yet, I am convinced, made a mistake. It has but one punishment—death—as it takes no cognizance of petty offenses. It gives every one a fair trial, and sentence is immediately pronounced and executed on all who are found guilty."

"It seems to me, however," said Tyscovus, after a moment's reflection, "that the existence of the necessity for such an extra-legal body as a vigilance committee is a confession of the inability of the people to govern themselves

under the forms of law. I came here an ardent republican, with unlimited faith in the capacity of mankind to rule themselves according to the innate principles of justice and right in every mind. I had lived where all the people are slaves, and hold their property, their happiness, their liberty, their very lives, at the will of one man. I have read much of the majesty and nobility and sense of justice of the people when allowed an opportunity to expand under free institutions. Well, I have lived under these free institutions for twenty-four hours, and I don't like them. I have been invaded by a lawless body of men, who take possession of my house at night, and come very near hanging me. I have been attacked and robbed under my own roof in broad daylight, and am told that the ruffian who stole my property must be allowed to go free, because no officer of the law dare arrest him; and I hear of other villains who defy the authorities. Your vigilance committee is worse than the Council of Ten of Venice, or the Vehmgerichte of Germany, for they were legal bodies, while yours, so far as I can see, is an irresponsible mob. My friend, I am not quite sure that I do not prefer Poland. There our lives and property are safe so long as we obey the laws and keep out of politics. There is but one master there, and he is civilized. Here there are a hundred or more, who are semi-barbarians. I think I would have a better chance of getting justice according to law there, under the despotism of one man, than here under that of a mob, with nothing to restrain them but their own unenlightened and vicious consciences."

The doctor listened in silence to this long and outspoken harangue. He was completely taken aback by the manner of the speaker, as well as by the language to which he gave utterance. Tyscovus was a natural orator. His gestures were well placed and used with the utmost effect, and the intonation and accent he employed gave force and expres-

sion to every word he spoke to just the extent necessary to make it convey the full purport of his thoughts.

But the doctor was a man of good sense in most matters, and of liberal education. He had served several years in the army as a surgeon, and had read much and traveled extensively. He had made especial study of politics and sociology, and flattered himself that he knew something of these inchoate sciences. He was not, therefore, disposed to rest quietly under the attacks that Tyscovus had made on some of his most cherished doctrines. At the same time he was forced to admit that there was considerable truth in what Tyscovus had said. Without, therefore, venturing a set reply, he merely said: "You are making no allowances for the fact that but a few months ago this region was inhabited only by wild beasts and Indians. Society is a progressive organization, but in a free country like this it advances with a rapidity of which you in Europe have no conception. Your laws have existed for many centuries. You ought, therefore, to have arrived at something like perfection in the knowledge of how to secure the happiness and general welfare of the people. I have traveled in Poland, and I saw more filth, wretchedness, and ignorance there in one month than I have seen in America in all my life. Here the degradation of individuals is exceptional; there it is general, and yet you have existed for hundreds of years. In ten years from now this Territory will abound in schools of all grades, there will be the fullest liberty under law, and life and property will be as safe as anywhere else under the sun. We will do more in ten years than you have done in a thousand. You have resided here twenty-four hours, and your experience has not, I confess, been altogether pleasant; but you have expressed sentiments here within these last five minutes, in regard to the government under which you live, which, if applied at home to your own government, would send you

to Siberia. Surely that is a privilege not to be undervalued, and worth a good deal of inconvenience in smaller matters. I am not going to argue the subject with you now. It will not be worth while; the logic of facts and experience will convert you, and if you stay with us a couple of years there will be no more thorough-going American than you. You have the energy, the ability, and the honesty to make your way if you choose."

"I am ready now to admit the truth of what you say about freedom of speech. It is a great right, and one which I enjoy hugely, because I have never enjoyed it before."

"Yes," answered the doctor, dryly, "so Higgins was telling me this afternoon. Ha, ha!" he went on, laughing heartily. "That was a good joke of yours about the 'escaped convict.' You have made a friend of Higgins, and he is prepared to worship you. But no more politics just now. I have good news for you."

"You have heard something of my papers?"

"Yes, I have not only heard of them, but here they are; every scrap that was in the cabin." With these words the doctor took from the breast-pocket of his coat a package, which he handed to Tyscovus.

"You are, indeed, a friend," exclaimed Tyscovus, overjoyed at again obtaining possession of his manuscripts; "but how did you get them?"

"I had just finished my visit to the patient—a bad case of gunshot-wound—I was called to see, when a messenger requested me to go to a child suddenly taken with convulsions. Of course, though in a hurry, I went at once. Doctors have very little choice in such matters. They must go whether they want to or not. I found it was Wilkins's baby, and it was having fit after fit, in a way sufficient to appall both father and mother. He was present, and I have rarely seen more real distress than he exhibited. After I

had done what I could for the child, in which fortunately I was successful, I taxed him with robbing you, and he at once admitted the charge. I reproached him with having stolen from one of my friends, and taken not only his money, but papers which were of no use to any one but the owner. 'Doc.,' said he (I hate that word 'doc.,' but one has to submit to it here), 'I'm a beast, I knows, but I ain't goin' to hurt any one o' your friends ef I knows it. Howsomever, he's the toughest customer as ever I come across, and I've seen a good smart lot, too. Here's his papers, which is all done up together; and here's his money, too—three hundred dollars in gold. The other things, seein' as how they're heftier and bulkier than you'd like to carry, I'll send over to the butte to-morrow. I can't do nothin' to hurt a friend o' your'n, doc. You've saved my baby, and Abe Wilkins don't forgit things like that.'

"I took the property and commended him for the change of principles which I assumed had caused the restitution, but he was too honest to sail under false colors.

"'It ain't that, doc.,' he said; 'it's jist because he's a friend o' your'n. Ef it wasn't for that, do you think I'd give back that gold and them papers as he'd give a thousand dollars for? Not much, doc.! I wouldn't be such a darnation fool, after the resk and the tussle I had to get 'em, too, to say nothin' of the worst fit o' that heart-ail as ever took me.'

"'Did he fight hard?' I asked.

"'Hard! Well, you ought just to 'a' seen him! You see, doc., I went thar, thinkin' as how I'd find a greenhorn from one o' them Eastern cities like them fellers as come here last year from New York with their pockets full o' greenbacks, and I kicked ag'in his door, and I meant to go in and tie him, and go through him and his ranch as quick as lightnin' and be off. But all at onst he bust open the door, and, afore I could git my senses together, he had me

by the throat, a-chokin' me like death. Whar he got his strength from, dang me ef I knows, but he looked like the devil, and his eyes seemed to go right through me as ef I was made o' that airth on the sage-plains, instead of good, solid Missouri clay. I squeezed him as hard as I could, but the feller was so darned thin I couldn't git no purchase on him, and I only wore myself out and he grippin' my throat like a vise. We was on the floor, and perhaps I mought 'a' worn him out, but all at once he got an extra clinch on me somehow or 'nother, and then I felt myself goin'. That's about all I knows of it till I come to and found myself alone in the cabin. In course, the chance was too good to pass by, so I jist helped myself to all there was and made off as fast as I could go. I seen you and him a-comin' along the road together, but I didn't know, doc., as he war a friend o' your'n. That heart-spell war a bad one, and I ain't got over it yit. I suppose it will git me some day.'

"I embraced the occasion to warn him against all such exciting occurrences as those in which he has been in the habit of participating, generally as chief actor.

"'It's no use, doc.,' he answered, with sadness in his tone and a mournful shake of the head; 'I s'pose my lines is laid out, and I've got to foller 'em. Either I'll die o' this heart-trouble, or the vigilance committee will string me up.'

"That is about the purport of our conversation," continued the doctor, laughing; "you see how proficient I am in his dialect. There's nothing easier than to fall into the manner of speech of these people, and, if I did not make strong efforts to prevent it, I should acquire it permanently, a fact which seems to show that theirs is a more natural or at least easier method than that sanctioned by grammarians. Now," he continued, putting, as he spoke, his hands into his trousers pockets and taking them out filled with gold-pieces, "let me get rid of this load. Here's your money, three hundred dollars."

Tyscovus could only express his thanks and astonishment. No experience he had ever passed through had brought him into contact with such a type of humanity as that by which he was now surrounded. Again, the thought took possession of him that it would be better, before going on with his work, to study human nature as it was found in the region in which he now lived. This, however, was neither the time nor the place to argue the subject with himself.

"There must be a great deal of good in these fellows," he said, after a long pause, "in spite of the generally vicious lives they lead. But for that," he continued, musingly, "so there is in every one, no matter how low or depraved he may be."

"That I deny," exclaimed the doctor, emphatically. "If there is any opinion which I am sure is wrong it is that optimistic one which finds good in all men. I have had a great deal of worldly experience, have met all kinds of people, and have seen men who did not have a single redeeming quality—men who were lower than the beasts, and viler than your imagination can conceive. For instance, there is your friend Jim Bosler, a cold-blooded murderer and thief, utterly incapable of a generous sentiment; a cruel, lying, treacherous knave, to compare whom to a beast would be a libel on what are called the lower animals—a man who ought to be killed on sight, as an enemy of mankind."

"I don't think he is so bad as that. Men are pretty much what circumstances or accidents make them. Among worthy associates, Bosler would probably have made a good citizen."

"You don't know him, and I do. You may think I speak warmly because he stole my blooded mare. But I thought the same of him long before he interfered with me. I saw him murder an inoffensive Mexican because he

would not drink with him; he threw a poor deformed boy into a well, for no other reason than that the unfortunate cripple's dog barked at him; and less than a month ago he killed a man named Hallam for nothing at all. These are only a few of his murders, and as to his other crimes they are innumerable."

"Doubtless he is, as you say, a great rascal," answered Tyscovus, "but his wife and daughter seem fond of him, and they scarcely would be if he were unkind to them. Give him credit, then, for some human feeling. I only saw him once, it is true, but I saw enough to convince me that, though rough, he was kind and considerate for their welfare."

"I don't think that should go for anything," rejoined the doctor; "even the she-wolf is tender with her cubs, and the rattlesnake does not bite its own young. But I deny that he is kind to them. He may not beat them or starve them or subject them to physical tortures, but these are negations. See how he has corrupted and brought down the woman, his wife, to his own low standard, and see what he is making of his daughter! I knew them all in Kansas many years ago, when I was a medical officer in the army. Bosler had a farm near the fort at which I was stationed. He was then a knave, a low, depraved wretch, a whisky seller and drinker, a thief, a debaucher of women. He married his wife while I was there. She never had much sense, but she was a good girl when he brought her home. He taught her to lie and steal, corrupted her moral principles, and—well, I can't tell you what else he did, but it was horrible! I never could quite prove it on him, or he'd have gone to the gallows long ago."

"The girl seems to be fond of him," said Tyscovus, feebly, for his little faith in Jim Bosler was being undermined by the vigorous assaults of the doctor. "I heard her pleading with him about something or other in which

she apparently gained the point, and she was evidently interceding with me for him, in advance of any predatory act he might perpetrate."

"Lal has many good points in her, I admit; I have known her ever since she was born, for I brought her into the world. Yes," he added, reflectively, "I'm quite sure of that, in any event. Under proper influences she would make a good woman, perhaps even a noble one. Her natural impulses are almost all good. She is frank, affectionate, independent, good-natured, when nothing crosses her, but the very devil when aroused. She likes Bosler because she does not know the full depth of his depravity, and because, as he is afraid of her, he treats her with some degree of consideration; but, poor girl! she will soon have reason to know how vile he is. She little knows what is in store for her."

"What do you mean, doctor?"

"I heard while at The Cañon that a fellow named Luke Kittle, generally known as 'The Gulcher,' is very much infatuated with Lal. Kittle is a desperado of the worst kind, and is horribly disfigured from the effects of an explosion in a mine. He has been in league with Bosler in some of his most nefarious schemes, aiding him and sharing the profits, and being one of the gang protecting him from vengeance. Now you will scarcely, perhaps, with your predilections, believe it, but I was told by Wilkins, who is one of the same lot, and who had no reason for lying about the matter, that Bosler has, in the presence of witnesses, repeatedly promised to give his daughter to Kittle as a wife in consideration of receiving five thousand dollars for himself, and knowing that the villain already has one living in St. Louis. Practically, the second wife, as we are not in Utah, will be only a mistress. Now, Mr. Tyscovus, what do you think of that? Does it not," continued the doctor, unable to resist the temptation of giving a shot at Tysco-

vus, "remind you of some of the doings in Circassia, which is, I believe, a part of the great Russian Empire?"

"It is perfectly horrible," said Tyscovus, not noticing the doctor's attack. "But are you sure of your facts?"

"Entirely. As I said, I had the circumstances from Wilkins, who informed me that he had first been told of the matter by Kittle himself. These men when they are 'pards,' as they call it, seldom deceive each other, and Wilkins would not deceive me. It was added, however, that Bosler was trying to get out of his bargain, but this was thought to be only an attempt to extort more money."

"She ought to be saved from the machinations of the wretch," said Tyscovus, with feeling. "Can nothing be done?"

"Yes, a good deal can be done. If I only knew where he was, I would inform the vigilance committee, and in a few hours Mr. Bosler would be swinging on a tree, and Lal would be saved."

"I know where he has gone, but I think I am bound in honor not to tell, unless the revelation of his whereabout be necessary to save the girl from Kittle's toils. I find it difficult, however, notwithstanding the apparent authenticity of your information, to credit the existence of so much villainy in a father."

"I could tell you worse things than that of Jim Bosler, and I know of other reasons which in his mind would relieve the act of much of its unnaturalness. It is true; that you may depend upon. To-morrow, I shall make some inquiries in regard to his hiding-place, so for the present let us drop him, and I will tell you something about whom you are going to meet at my house."

"I am anxious to know, and am prepared to like them. I hope they will like me."

"There is only one—my daughter, Theodora, the 'Gift of God.' Her mother died five years ago, leaving her to my

sole care. I have brought her up in a somewhat peculiar way, unfortunately, for it ought to be the way in which all girls should be educated. As it is not, it is peculiar, of course. My studies—medical, anthropological, historical, and general—have convinced me that the relative position of men and women should be changed. That is, the governing power of the world should be placed in the female sex. Mentally and morally man is far below woman. He only excels her physically, and he has seized power by means of his brute force, and holds it by the mere strength of bone and muscle. It is an instance of the triumph of matter over mind; but, of course, only a temporary one, though it may last yet for centuries to come. What are centuries, however, in the long eternity of the universe?"

Tyscovus listened in astonishment. Doctrines such as these he had not only never heard, but they were far in advance of any of which he had read. Here was an apparently sensible man, a man of the world and of education, enunciating views that in Poland would have been considered evidence of his insanity, and have probably been good ground for committing him to a lunatic asylum. And this, too, with a coolness of demeanor as though he were giving utterance to the most commonplace sentiments! He was unprepared to say a word, even if it would have been proper under the circumstances to question the correctness of the doctor's ideas. Without seeming to notice the expression of amazement on Tyscovus's face, the doctor continued:

"Holding these doctrines, it was, of course, my duty to educate my daughter in accordance with their tenets, and thus to give the world a practical example of the faith that I had in their correctness. I did not propose to unsex her—to dress her in man's clothing, or to make her affect the manners and customs of the opposite sex. On the contrary, my object was to develop her womanhood to its utmost limit, and to show that a woman's brain is capable of

evolving the most intense and most abstract thoughts. I have no sympathy with the women who play base-ball, and row boats, and ride steeple-chases, in emulation of men. They who do these things, and many others I might mention, are merely reducing themselves to the level of men, and are hence destroying their womanhood. Brains should govern this world, not muscle. Woman has the brain, man has the muscle. He has developed his brain, but woman heretofore has kept hers in what may be called its chrysalis state. However, to come to the application.

"My daughter is just turned twenty-one. She has never been to school. I have educated her myself. She is a true woman in perceptions, intellect, emotions, and will. She has to-day the best mind in the Territory. She is, in fact, mind personified. I have discouraged all athletic pursuits. She has never been in a gymnasium, nor swung an Indian club, nor a pair of dumb-bells, nor dangled at the end of a flying trapeze. She walks a good deal, but only for the purpose of improving her mind by the study of Nature, not with any object of developing her legs; and she rides horseback—a fiery, spirited animal—in order that she may become accustomed to governing. There is nothing so good to begin on as a high-strung, self-willed, even vicious, horse. She is now engaged on a series of experiments in evolution, from which I anticipate the most striking and original results. As to her looks, *I* think she is beautiful, for every feature of her face expresses mind, and that's what I want to see in a woman's face, after all. But of that you will judge for yourself. Thus there are only us two out here in the mountains of Colorado, living almost alone, for we have very little society in the town, but yet as happy as the day is long. I may add that my daughter assists me in my practice. She has never taken a medical degree, but she has studied under my direction; is a first-class anatomist and physiologist, having dissected hundreds of animals,

from man to insects, and, though she does not go out to see patients, there are many who, preferring her opinion to mine, come to her during her office-hours, and I often consult her in my difficult cases."

"Could this man be really a lunatic?" thought Tyscovus, while the doctor was speaking. "A girl of twenty-one having a medical practice and acting as consulting physician with her father, and in difficult cases, too!" This capped the climax of his experience in the far West, and here were still different types of humanity to study before he could go on with his book. The doctor's views, as he had expressed them, were directly at variance with his own on like subjects. They were so preposterous that he could scarcely bring himself to regard the holder of them as sane and responsible for his beliefs. But there were no excitement of manner, no exaggeration of language, no incoherence of expression, such as would have been, in all probability, exhibited by a maniac; and the doctor's previous conversation and actions had been such as altogether to preclude the idea of mental derangement. So he must be in his right mind, and must have spoken the truth. But, if so, what sort of a woman was the daughter, brought up under such influences, with a medical education, having dissected animals of all kinds, from a man to a caterpillar, and who was now performing experiments relative to evolution? He felt sorry he had accepted the doctor's invitation. A woman of the kind he imagined to himself, when he thought of the description just given, would certainly be an abomination to him. It was one contrary to all his ideas of the eternal fitness of things, and of common decency. He pictured her to himself as of sickly physical organization, with a hollow chest, round shoulders, a big, overgrown head, an enormous nose, weak, spectacled eyes, with congested lids, a dirty, sallow complexion, huge feet, clumsy hands, with red and bony knuckles, and sitting all day with

a dissecting-knife in her hand, or her eyes screwed into a microscope, or peering into a retort watching eperiments in evolution! Was there no escape for him? Must he meet this horrible creature and pass several days in her company, while she discussed the revelations of her scalpel or bored him with disquisitions on evolution and spontaneous generation? The idea was horrible! If something would only happen—a tornado, an earthquake, an attack by road-agents—anything, no matter how horrible, to save him from the greatest misfortune that had yet befallen him, he would be willing to endure it uncomplainingly.

He was recalled to himself by the voice of the doctor. "I hope you will like her; she is very dear to me and wonderfully intelligent. But here we are, and you will soon be able to judge for yourself."

While Tyscovus was thinking, the vehicle had entered an inclosure and had stopped in front of a large and handsomely built house. There was no time for an answer, or, in fact, for any remarks in reply to the doctor's expression of his opinions and the description of his daughter. The two gentlemen jumped out of the gig, while a man came round from somewhere behind the house and took charge of the horses.

The doctor preceded his guest up the wide steps that led to the piazza, and, crossing it, threw open the door. "Welcome to Chetolah!" he said, with a hearty ring in his voice that made Tycovus a little ashamed of his thoughts of a moment ago. "'*Toda mi casa esta a su disposicion de V. señor,*' as the Mexicans say, but with this difference: that whereas with them it is a mere courteous formality, signifying nothing, with me it comes from the depths of my heart, and means all that the most learned philologist could extract from the words."

CHAPTER XI.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

TYSCOVUS had latterly been waging war against his emotional nature, and had begun to flatter himself that he had, in a great measure, subjected it to the control of the intellectual part of his mental organization. He had shown his mastery over his feelings in his treatment of the vigilance committee; he had measurably restrained himself during the visitation of Mr. Higgins, having treated that gentleman, from an intellectual stand-point, after due consideration of the matters at issue and upon purely business principles. But the attack upon his privacy made by Abe Wilkins or "The Monkey" had entirely disturbed the relations between intellect and feeling, which he had begun to believe were well established. He had altogether lost control over himself, had flown into a violent passion, and had assaulted, *vi et armis*, the individual who had invaded his premises. He had endeavored to justify his action upon the ground that he had simply defended himself from the burglarious act of a desperado, but reflection in calmer moments had tended to convince him that he had been inconsistent with the ideas of propriety which, after mature reflection, he had deemed most suitable for the regulation of his own conduct. "How much better," he had said to himself, during the drive from the butte to Hellbender, "that he should have allowed Abe Wilkins to batter his door down, and to have helped himself to his

property, than to have indulged in a vulgar broil with a ruffian over a few dollars' worth of effects!"

How much more dignified would have been his conduct, if he had gone on with his writing, and had reasoned calmly with the house-breaker relative to the nefarious nature of his proceedings!

Doubtless, the man would have listened, and would have bargained liberally with him in regard to the papers and any other thing of special value he might have wished to retain. He would have gone away peaceably. The stolen property could have been readily replaced, he would not have encountered the doctor, and, above all, he would not have had forced upon him an association with a horrible human nondescript, such as the physician's daughter undoubtedly was. Altogether, it would have been more consistent and more profitable to him to have controlled his actions, and to have allowed "The Monkey" the free range of his house.

And now again his emotions were getting the better of him. The last speech of the doctor's had fairly unsettled him. He could only seize his host's hand and press it fervently, not trusting himself to speak, lest he should display yet greater feeling. Besides, he still felt ashamed of himself for the ideas he had just entertained, and which he conceived were disloyal to the kind-hearted gentleman, who had befriended him in his hour of need, and a poor return for his trouble and hospitality.

The two gentlemen had hardly more than taken off their hats and overcoats, when a light step was heard on the floor above, and, almost instantly afterward, the gentle sound of feet on the oak staircase and the rustling of drapery reached their ears. It was nearly dark out-of-doors, and no light had as yet been placed in the hall, so that Tyscovus could not distinguish the face of the lady who now came toward them. What he did see, however, of her

general appearance was sufficient to somewhat disturb his prepossessions.

"Ah, Dorie, my dear, how are you?" exclaimed the doctor, as she threw her arms around his neck and kissed him. "I was just beginning to wonder why you had not made your appearance."

"I was busy in the laboratory, papa, and did not hear the gig on the gravel; I was already wondering why you did not come, when I heard the horses neighing as Francisco took them round to the stable. Did you have much to do at The Cañon?"

"Yes, more than I expected—some of it very pleasant work too. I have brought a friend with me, the Polish gentleman of whom we were speaking this morning.—Mr. Tyscovus," he continued, "allow me to present you to my daughter."

The gentleman and lady bowed, and the latter, holding out her hand, said: "You are very welcome to Chetolah, Mr. Tyscovus; papa has become quite tired of talking to me, I believe, and you will be a godsend to him."

"Mr. Tyscovus knows that, however tired I may be of talking *to* you, I have shown no signs of fatigue of talking *of* you," said the doctor, laughing.

"I shall put you in the confessional after tea, and make you tell me all you said. Then I shall appeal to Mr. Tyscovus to know if you have told 'the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.'"

"Great Heaven!" thought Tyscovus, was this the female physician, the dissector, the experimental evolutionist?—this woman, whose tall and comely form he could see in outline against the dark wall near which she stood, whose voice was melody, whose manners were grace itself, and whose little, cool, firm hand was as unlike the clammy, flabby, big one with prominent knuckles he had imagined, as that of a Baltimore maiden is removed from

that of a German hausfrau! He could only stammer out awkwardly a few words of acknowledgment, while he bowed low, as though he were standing before a Polish princess.

"Come, Dorie," said the doctor, "have Mr. Tyscovus shown to his room. Send him from my wardrobe all the clothes he wants—no, never mind that, I'll do it myself; how the deuce should you know what he'll want?—and then give us something to eat, for I am *sure* he's dying with hunger and I *know* I am. Remember there is a decided difference between being sure of a thing and knowing it. In the one case a certain amount of doubt is—"

"Yes, papa, but while you are drawing nice philological distinctions, Mr. Tyscovus is waiting for an opportunity to wash his face and hands, and get off some of the alkaline dust with which he is doubtless covered.—Thomas," she continued, to the man who now came forward, "you ought to have been here to help the gentlemen off with their coats. Now show Mr. Tyscovus to the Japanese room, and then get for him the clothes that the doctor will give you."

"If you please, miss," said the man, speaking with an English accent, "I was late because I was watching the *coluber constrictor*. I think they're coming, miss."

"Very well, Thomas. Now do as I tell you.—Excuse me, Mr. Tyscovus," she added, turning to that gentleman, "I have an important matter to look after, and in the mean time you will find your room ready. Come down to the drawing-room when you have finished your toilet. You will find us—or at least me—waiting for you, and then we shall have some tea."

"You will, I am sure, pardon any incongruity of dress I may exhibit, Miss Willis," said Tyscovus, "when I tell you that I have been for several days separated from my baggage, and have been, besides, the victim of a robbery."

"Oh, yes! Papa never wears evening dress now, except when we make our usual summer visits to the East. A swallow-tailed coat," she added, with a little silvery laugh, "would indeed be more of an incongruity in Hellbender than anything you are likely to present. And then, when you come down, you shall tell me about the robbery."

Tyscovus again bowed; speech was still, in a measure, wanting; his astonishment was redoubled with every word he heard fall from the lips of the self-possessed, polished, considerate, and doubtless beautiful girl, who had so suddenly appeared to him on the very outskirts of civilization, surrounded by Jim Boslers, Abe Wilkinses, Mr. Higginses, vigilance committees, and other inconsonant things. He was utterly bewildered, and, scarcely knowing whether he was on his head or his heels, he followed the servant to the room that had been assigned to him.

"Is there anything more, sir?" said the man, when he had attended with the utmost fidelity to all of Tyscovus's wants.

"No, thanks. Yes, there is," he added, after a little hesitation, "there is one thing more. I am a miserable ignoramus, but, like other fools, I am full of curiosity. Will you be so kind as to tell me what a '*coluber constrictor*' is?"

"Oh, certainly, sir, with pleasure, sir," said Thomas, grinning with the consciousness of superior knowledge. "A '*coluber constrictor*' is a black snake. It's the scientific name, sir."

"Oh, yes, of course! Thank you, that will do.—A black snake!" he continued, talking to himself, after the man had left the room, as he made a thorough application of cold water, put on one of the doctor's shirts which was a mile too big for him, and otherwise made himself presentable. "A black snake! and even the servants versed

in zoölogical lore! 'And they are coming.' What are coming? More *coluber constrictors*, I suppose, and she has gone off to see them. But the idea of a lady, and a lady like that, busying herself with such things! It is horrible! simply horrible! I shall not go on with my book till I have seen more of these wonderful people, and of this especially wonderful girl. O my prophetic father! How well you knew your son, when you dubbed him 'John Buridan's Ass'! If you could look into his heart now and see the doubt and uncertainty reigning there, you would flap your angelic wings with joy at the idea of your foreknowledge."

He kept on thinking a good deal more to the same effect, and then, having got himself into a somewhat suitable shape for appearing before a lady, descended the broad oaken staircase to the drawing-room, which, as Thomas had informed him, was the first apartment on the right of the front door. The hall was now lighted, and he saw that the doctor had enriched it with several excellent paintings, that here and there a bracket bore a lovely little bit of bronze or porcelain, and that a few rare old Delft placques hung at intervals on the walls. He stopped for a moment before a portrait, that attracted his attention more on account of the ugliness of the face represented on the canvas than from any excellence of the painting, as a work of art, though it was not badly done. It was that of a woman of about twenty-five years of age. She had a scalpel in her hand, that she had apparently just been using on a frog that lay on the table before her; for the animal was dead, and the skin had been removed from one leg, exposing the large nerve in the thigh, with which the wires from a small galvanic battery were in contact. The expression of the young woman's face was certainly intellectual; but there was no trace of refinement to be detected, and those elements which go to make up what is called a type of beauty

were conspicuous by their absence. The eyes were small and wide apart; the forehead high, broad, and prominent, like that of a dangerously precocious child; the nose sharp and prominent, with a disagreeable twist to one side; the mouth wide, the lips thin and ill-shaped, and the lower jaw massive—almost masculine in character. The hair was arranged like that of a man, cut short and parted on one side, and but for the dress the portrait might readily have been taken for that of a coarse-grained though intelligent man.

Tyscovus felt his heart sink within him as he studied this portrait. It must be that of the doctor's daughter; of the girl who had "dissected all kinds of animals from a man to an insect," and who had chosen to be painted while engaged in her favorite occupation, with a frog for her subject. It was just such a face as he had, during the drive from the butte to the doctor's residence, imagined the intellectual daughter of that gentleman to possess, except that there were no spectacles. It was just such a face as he would have drawn had he been asked to represent his idea of a female anatomist. For once, then, his preconceptions were correct, and the certainty he felt on this point gave him that species of satisfaction that every one feels when his anticipations have been realized, especially when they have been formed from insufficient premises. It was a disappointment—a grievous disappointment—for he had, during the last half-hour, been looking forward with pleasure to meeting the girl with the graceful figure and musical voice, but still it was in accordance with the harmony of Nature, which rarely gives great intellect and great beauty to any one woman.

He raised his eyes once more to the portrait. It was assuredly not a commonplace face, but it was certainly a very disagreeable one. And he was to be more or less in the company of the woman it represented for several days,

to listen to the conversation between her and her father in regard to their joint patients; to hear her discourses on evolution and other scientific subjects of which she could not possibly have more than the most superficial idea! That she was superficial there could be no doubt. All women were that he had ever met, and his female acquaintance, at one period of his life, had been extensive.

His hat hung on a peg at his side. He could seize it and take French leave of the doctor and his intellectual daughter. For an instant, he felt impelled to rush out of the house and make his way back to the butte as well as he could on foot, and in the darkness of the night. To do so would put an end to all his relations with two people who, as matters now stood, were certain to interfere with the successful prosecution of his plans. But though, like all other persons, he had impulses toward the perpetration of incongruous acts, Tyscovus was a gentleman from the roots of his hair to the soles of his feet. Without another moment's hesitation, he opened the drawing-room door.

CHAPTER XII.

THE WOMAN AND THE MAN.

It was a large and well-furnished apartment in which he found himself. It was lighted to just that degree of illumination which reveals objects without giving the vulgar glare of a shop-window with its electric light or dozen gas-burners. His eyes at once rested on the doctor and his daughter.

"I was expecting to have a laugh at you," said Theodora, "when you appeared in papa's clothes. But I see I shall not be able to enjoy the luxury. They seem to fit you admirably."

She laughed a light, rippling, musical laugh as she spoke. Tyscovus looked at her for a moment, as she stood in front of the open wood-fire, with one hand resting on her father's shoulder, while the other caressed a beautiful brown setter that stood by her side, wagging its tail and gazing wistfully and affectionately into her face. It was only the look of a fraction of a minute, but it was enough for the object he had in view, though he felt as if he would be willing to stand there forever if she continued to stand there before him.

It is stated by Houdin, the magician, that when he was training his son to follow in the footsteps of his father, it was his custom to take him to walk in the streets of Paris, and to cause him to tell at a glance the contents of the shop-windows before which he passed. At first the boy made many mistakes, but, little by little, he acquired the

power to enumerate every one of a hundred or more articles he had seen in a window as he walked rapidly by it, glancing but for an instant at the contents. Women seem to have this faculty intuitively. Who has not seen two women meet in the street, look at each other for a moment as they passed, then turn round for a glance behind, and then go home and tell their friends every article of apparel that each one wore?

Tyscovus had practiced himself in this art, and had acquired a high degree of perfection in its exercise. He could even tell on the instant the number of watches hanging on their racks in a jeweler's window, or describe with the utmost minuteness and exactness the features of half a dozen persons upon whom he had given no more than a passing glance. A momentary inspection, therefore, was all that was requisite to give him a correct idea of the facial characteristics of Theodora Willis.

Instead of the original of the portrait in the hall, he saw before him a face certainly the most beautiful he had ever seen in all his life. But, aside from the grace and perfection of every feature, the expression was one of such depth of feeling and high mental development, that he saw at once that hers was an exception to Nature's usual method of constructing the faces of women. On her forehead were a few curls of the reddish-brown hair, the rest of which appeared to have been gathered up as it fell in masses over her shoulders, and brought together in a simple knot on the back of her head. Her eyes were of a dark gray, large, bright, intelligent, vivacious, and evidently used, not simply for seeing, but for looking. A fool can see, but it is only those with minds that are trained and developed who know how to look. Theodora was one of these. Her mouth was large enough for all the purposes for which Nature intended it, and was shaped like that of the "San Sisto Madonna," though perhaps more expressive of the expansive emotions

than is that feature in Raphael's wonderful picture. When it is added that her teeth were perfect; that her nose was not quite a continuation of the plane of the forehead, as is that of the Venus de' Medici; that her complexion was an ivory-white, just allowing at times a tinge of pink to appear on her cheeks, and that the general contour of her head when looked at from the front was seen to be almost exactly that of an egg, there is nothing more to be said that can give an idea of Theodora Willis's face. All such descriptions, no matter how exact they may be, fail absolutely to tell how the person they refer to looks. There is always so much that depends on the mind, and that varies with every emotion and thought, that no one can convey to another the idea that a face creates.

For an instant, Tyscovus felt such a revulsion of feeling at the sight of the beautiful girl before him, so utterly unlike the one he had expected to see, that he stood as if rooted to the floor. The sound of her voice, her silvery laugh, her pleasantly spoken and unconventional, even familiar words, which, innocent as they were, were of such a character that no maiden in all Poland would have used them under like circumstances; her self-reliance, never reaching boldness; her ready adaptability to the situation, all flashed over him like a bright beam of sunlight reflected by a mirror, and brought him in a measure to himself. Still, he had not entirely recovered his normal degree of composure and *aplomb*, when, advancing toward her, he bowed with the formality and deference which a Polish gentleman always exhibits toward ladies with whom he is not on the most intimate terms based on a long acquaintanceship.

"I am so bewildered," he said at last, with a smile that touched the hearts of his two auditors at once and put them both in sympathy with him, "at the many evidences of good taste and refinement that I see around me

wherever I turn my eyes, here beyond what is generally known as the confines of civilization, that perhaps I do not feel so awkward in my borrowed plumage as I otherwise would. If the doctor could only give me with his coat a portion of his philanthropy, and you, Miss Willis," bowing low to Theodora as he spoke, "with your kind words a share of your amiability, I should be content to be iucongruous."

"That's all true about your lacking philanthropy," broke in the doctor. "Think of a man in the latter part of the nineteenth century trying to live in absolute solitude! Yes, you certainly do want philanthropy; but amiability! Bah! Amiable people are always weak, and, if you got your amiability from Theodora, you'd have precious little, for she hasn't enough to swear by."

"A beautiful character you are giving me, papa!" said Theodora.—"Come, Mr. Tyscovus," she continued, taking his arm, "tea is ready for us. Don't let him corrupt you with the horrible sentiments he utters. He loves amiable people, and, if I were not amiable, there would not be much peace of mind for him in this house."

"It is not your amiability that subdues me," said the doctor, as they went into the tea-room adjoining; "I recognize the existence of your superior intellect, and, in accordance with my sociological belief, I think you ought to govern. And you do, Dorie, as you know very well."

Theodora smiled without making any response to this assertion of her father's.

Just as they were sitting down to such a "tea" as is usually eaten by well-to-do Southern families living on their estates in the country, Thomas, who was officiating at the table, approached Theodora with every appearance of interest, and said, loud enough for all to hear, "If you please, miss, Jane says they're coming."

"So you told me less than an hour ago."

"Yes, miss, but she says she can see the toes now."

"I am afraid I must ask you to excuse me for a moment," said Theodora, addressing the gentlemen, "but, before I leave you, I will make your tea." With which words she seated herself at the head of the table, and busied herself with the tea-things for a few minutes. Then, with a smile and a remark that she would not be gone long, she left the room.

"What could it mean?" thought Tyscovus. This was the second time he had heard the statement made that "they were coming," and now it was supplemented with the assertion that the "toes" were making their appearance. Was she, like Frankenstein, constructing a monster or several of them, or was she engaged in experiments with an *ecaleobion*, and were the eggs just beginning to hatch? Yes! this must be it. These, then, were the investigations in evolution that the doctor had informed him his daughter was conducting. The idea tended to lessen the charm that he felt Theodora was casting over him. He began to conceive that she was something of an anomaly, a heterogeneous compound of feminine and masculine characteristics, and hence likely to become a more or less unpleasant acquaintance. He had not yet shaken off the influence of early associations, and of the traditions of many centuries of European civilization, all of which went to confirm the conviction that the pathway of woman through life should be straight and narrow, and that the only fruits she should be allowed to gather were those that her sex had gathered before her, and that were to be found without effort ready to fall into her hands. That she could make experiments in natural science, and at the same time retain those womanly characteristics of mind and person that Theodora apparently possessed, was to him an impossibility. The mere study of such a subject as develop-

ment must inevitably take from her something of her femininity, and hence lower her in his estimation.

His meditations were interrupted by the doctor.

"She's a wonderful woman; and I am glad that at last her great experiments in evolution are about to succeed. She has devoted nearly six months' intense study and labor to the investigations. At one time, we both thought the result would be nothing; but, latterly, the signs that she is about to triumph over all obstacles, and to demonstrate to the world that evolution is truth, are unmistakable. She may not establish the fact to-day, but, if not to-day, she will to-morrow; and if not to-morrow, then the day after. A few hours more or less are of no consequence."

"May I ask," said Tyscovus, "the nature of the experiments?"

The doctor hesitated for a moment, and then with a laugh, answered: "Oh, she will tell you herself; and not only that, but I am sure she will be delighted to explain them to you in detail, and to show you all the apparatus and agents by which success is to be attained. She will not fail—she never fails!"

"I do not know," rejoined Tyscovus, "which most to admire, the scientific acquirements of Miss Willis, or your faith in your daughter's capacity to grapple with the most abstruse problem of Nature. Doubtless your encouragement is her highest incentive."

"Not at all—not at all!" exclaimed the doctor. "The most powerful factor she has to urge her to work is her own indomitable will, prompted by her love for science. Oh, she is a wonderful woman! There never was her equal!"

Tyscovus bowed an assent, as politeness required, but his astonishment at the extravagant laudations that the doctor lavished on his daughter was so intense that he scarcely knew what reply to make in words. Happily, be-

fore it was necessary for him to express an opinion, Theodora returned.

"It was all a mistake," she said, with a smile, which showed that, however great might be her disappointment, she knew how to conceal it. "Jane has again allowed her wishes to run away with her judgment. She mistook two rather large ventral scales for toes."

"Jane is an ass," interrupted the doctor; "she always was an ass, and, of course, she always will be one. Assininity is ineradicable."

"I am sorry to hear that," said Tyscovus, laughing, "for you know I am one. But then I am a man, also. If I were not a donkey, I suppose I would know what 'ventral scales' are."

"Oh, that will be part of your instruction to-morrow, when Theodora asks you to visit her laboratory. In the mean time, for your consolation, I may tell you that I did not know myself when I was your age, but—"

"If you please, sir," said a servant-maid, interrupting him, "there's a man just been killed at 'The Gem,' and they want you to come down as soon as possible."

"A man been killed! Well, and what in the devil have I to do with dead men? That comes of taking a bullet from a fellow's brain a few days ago. There's no such advertisement for a doctor as a cured patient. Most people are proud of their diseases, and when they get cured, or rather when they get well, they are proud of their doctor. —Are you sure the man is dead, Mary?"

"Well, sir, the boy who brought the message said he was shot in the heart, and I know that when a man gets shot in the heart he always dies."

"Oh, you did! Mary, I am afraid I shall have to put you in the same category with Jane."

"Oh, sir, don't, please, sir! It's bad enough to be in a laboratory, much less a category."

The doctor laughed, as did also Theodora and Tyscovus. "Evidently," thought the latter, "the scientific atmosphere of the house is inhaled by all the servants, but they get it in a very diluted form."

"I suppose I shall have to leave you," said the doctor, hastily swallowing the remainder of his tea and gulping down a piece of antelope-cutlet. "Of course, the man is not dead. He is probably shot somewhere in the chest."

"How horrible it all is!" said Theodora. "Hellbender is usually a very orderly place, but we have had two shooting affrays in the past week."

"There's been an invasion of discharged miners from The Cañon," replied the doctor, "who are great ruffians, and who seem bent on causing trouble. Well, good-by," he continued. "Take care of Mr. Tyscovus, Dorie, till I come back, which will be in an hour, I suppose." With which words the doctor took his departure, and, after a few minutes' conversation on indifferent subjects, the two others proceeded to the drawing-room.

"Mr. Tyscovus," said Theodora, after they had placed themselves in comfortable arm-chairs before the fire, "in what I am going to say to you I think I am doing right, for it will be the means of averting misunderstanding that is certain to occur if you are kept in ignorance of certain facts. Father has taken a great liking to you, and you will probably see a good deal of him, and perhaps of me, too," she added, with a bright smile, "and I am anxious, therefore, to stand well in your eyes, or, at least, not to be thought worse than I really am. But I am still more anxious that you should not misjudge my father, who is all the world to me, as I am to him."

"My dear Miss Willis," said Tyscovus, "whatever you may say will command my serious attention; but I beg that—"

"Oh, I am sure you do not regard any explanations as

necessary, but it is to prevent them becoming so that I am about to speak of matters that are of intense interest to me.

"About five years ago my mother, after a long illness, died of a painful and lingering disease. My father had nursed her with the most tender care, sparing neither his means nor his time to make her life happy while it lasted, and to smooth her way to the grave. In these objects he was as successful as humanity can ever be under such circumstances. She died in his arms, and the light of his life was for a time extinguished."

Theodora stopped for a moment. Tyscovus, who had been sitting at some little distance from her, drew his chair nearer, as if instinctively impelled to offer his sympathy. After a moment's pause, she resumed:

"For several months he was, if not deprived of his reason, in such a state of profound melancholy, that I feared he might be persuaded by his morbid thoughts to destroy himself; but, fortunately, one day the cloud was suddenly lifted, and he appeared to be almost in his natural state of good health. Previous to my mother's death, he had always been very fond of me, but I was at the time a mere child, and scarcely capable of interesting him to an extent beyond that resulting from our relations as father and daughter. But now he began to take an interest in my education, that he had not before evinced, and I noticed also that his views relative to woman had undergone a radical change. He had always vehemently opposed what are called 'woman's rights,' and was especially violent against women-physicians, whom he denounced as libels on their sex, and unworthy of being recognized by the medical profession. Now, however, I discovered that he had elevated woman to a position in intellect above that occupied by man; that he was in favor of every profession, and particularly the medical, being opened to her; and

that he thought she not only ought to be allowed to vote, but that the government of nations should be placed in her hands. He had always before this contended that every woman was more or less hysterical, but now he declared that what he had regarded as hysteria was only a condition in which nerve-force was exploded in an irregular and violent manner, and that this would all be obviated by educating women in such a way as to develop their intellect at the expense of their emotions. I then found that my education was to be conducted in accordance with these principles. He had heard of a Swiss lady, a certain Fräulein Schwartzfeld, and he determined to send for her and commit my education to her hands. I was hardly old enough to appreciate the full benefit of the course of development upon which I had entered. Fräulein Schwartzfeld was a woman certainly without marked emotions of any kind. But she had, apparently, mastered the details of what she had come to teach me, and hence, as I was assiduous, I began to learn and to take an interest in my studies. But I did not, for all that, neglect those things that I instinctively felt a woman ought to know. The Fräulein, therefore, with a little persuasion from me, was induced to teach me French and German, and to read with me the most notable works in the literature of those languages with which she thought I ought to be acquainted. We had a well-selected library, and I made good use of it in pursuing a course of reading in English literature. Still, my education was mainly in the direction of science, and especially natural history.

"But about two years ago, my father, who all this time had watched my progress with the greatest interest, and who was constantly encouraging me to work harder, conceived the idea that I must study medicine. Fräulein Schwartzfeld had taken the degree of doctor of medicine both at Zurich and at Paris, and was fully qualified to give

instruction in that branch of science. I did not at all fancy the idea at first, but finally I was persuaded by my father and the Fräulein to begin. With every book I read, and every scrap of information I acquired, I liked it better, until, at last, I think I could have said that nothing I had ever undertaken had given me more pleasure."

"Of course, Miss Willis," said Tyscovus, who had listened to every word with almost breathless interest, "you have had very little opportunity in this part of the world for the practical study of anatomy. Dead bodies—healthy ones, too—are probably plenty enough, but the generality of ignorant people, such as are about you, have prejudices, and do not like to have their friends and relations dissected."

Theodora raised her eyes to his, and met his look unflinchingly, but with a modesty that was revealed by the slight flush that mantled to her cheeks. There was something in his voice, though not in his words, that told her that he was not prepared to approve of women searching for knowledge in the direction of anatomizing corpses. Yet, if she had been asked to state what it was, she would not have been able to comply. Perhaps it was the least possible sarcasm that cropped out against his will, and tinged the words with its hue of condemnation.

"I have dissected several human bodies," she said, gravely and deliberately, as though measuring the import of each word, "and I have never done so without feeling that the act was one of awful majesty, not to be undertaken lightly. I have always felt that there before me lay a temple in which God had placed, and from which he had taken away, an immortal soul; that, only a few hours before, it had been moving about on the earth alive, its heart beating, its brain replete with thought, and that now it was helpless, dead, and at the mercy of all who might approach it with good or evil intent. To seek with reverence

to understand its wonderful mechanism, to come before it with the spirit of truth and knowledge, knowing that it was made in God's own image, never caused me to feel that I had degraded myself, either in my own estimation or in that of good and intelligent men and women the world over."

"Whatever you would do, you would do nobly," said Tyscovus, speaking with emotion. "You remind me of the times when it was deemed impious for any one to dissect a human body, and when the thunders of the Church were directed against those who disregarded the injunctions that religion imposed. I can understand your feelings, Miss Willis. I remember a picture by Hamon, in the Louvre, I think, that represents Vesalius about to begin the dissection of a corpse stretched out at full length on a rough table, in a narrow cell, lighted by a single small window, and no one present to witness the sacrilegious deed. Vesalius stands with the knife in his hand, but, before making his first incision, he turns his head and looks earnestly at the crucifix hanging on the wall, as though to ask the divine sanction for an act that he feels is a righteous one. Perhaps, ere long, we will regard those who view with disapprobation, it may be," he added, after a little pause, "even with disgust, the idea of women dissecting dead bodies, very much as we now do those benighted people who, three hundred years ago, persecuted Vesalius."

His words did not express his own approval, but they were nevertheless kind, and certainly not condemnatory. She gave him a look of gratitude, and then resumed:

"I pursued my medical studies with great ardor under the direction of Fräulein Schwartzfeld and my father. The fact became known, and I was often visited by sick women, and by others who brought their children to me for treatment. I was fortunate enough to be of service to

many, and in this way I found that a boundless field for charitable works was open to me. But I have never received a fee for my services. It has never been my object to pursue medicine as a profession. I studied because I loved the science, linked as it is indissolubly with all other sciences, and I practice it for the good that it enables me to do."

Tyscovus was silent. He was thinking of the strange circumstance that here, in the wilds of the Western Continent, he should be receiving lessons in charity and progress from a beautiful girl ten years his junior, who showed by every word she uttered that she had convictions of which she was not ashamed or afraid, and whose self-reliance and presence of mind were apparently equal to any emergency in which she might be placed.

"I should scarcely have felt at liberty, Mr. Tyscovus," she continued—and now her voice trembled slightly, and he thought he saw her eyes dim with the tears that started to them—"to trouble you with this long account of myself, but that it is a necessary introduction to what I am now about to say. All this time—ever since my mother's death, I think—I began to notice that my father became singular in his ideas and conduct. I have already mentioned how his views in regard to women had suddenly changed. But little by little it seemed as though his opinions were being concentrated on me. He acquired the most exaggerated idea of my mental qualities and powers, and was constantly speaking in public of what he considered was my great intellect. Upon one occasion he attended a political meeting, and nominated me for mayor of the city. Then he insisted on naming me as a candidate for the Legislature, and in other ways he has brought me prominently, and, I need not say, very much to my repugnance, before the community. To everybody whose acquaintance he makes he extols me in the most extravagant and entirely erroneous

way; one calculated to give sensible people a very mistaken idea of my capacity and opinions. So far, however, as I am myself concerned, I should not care for this, but his statements are so utterly at variance with probability, that it has frequently happened that he has been accused of intentional misrepresentation, whereas nothing could be further from the truth, for he certainly believes everything he says. I am often obliged to humor him, for any avoidance on my part of his laudation causes him great distress, from which, sometimes, he does not recover for several days, and which once produced such a degree of mental excitement as to alarm me very much. I have, therefore, to beg—and this is the chief object of this long story—that you will not misjudge him in what he may say of me, or question the correctness of any opinions he may express. I have felt it my duty, even at the risk of wearying you, to enlighten you in regard to my father's state of mind on this one subject. On every other point he is as mentally sound as it is possible for a person to be; but, every day, I think I can see that he becomes more and more infatuated and unbalanced where I am concerned. Knowing its cause, and his great affection for me, I can not find it in my heart to oppose him, and there is no physician here to whom I can apply for advice. I am, consequently, under continual apprehension lest his actions may lead him into trouble, or the mental disturbance extend to other subjects. You are the first one to whom I have unburdened my mind since Fräulein Schwartzfeld left us, several months ago, to establish a school in Denver."

She ceased speaking, and was evidently controlling herself with difficulty. Tyscovus was embarrassed. He felt for her deeply, and would have been only too glad to have shown his sympathy, but he had known her for only a couple of hours, and how can a man of thirty years of age exhibit feeling toward a woman of twenty-one, and on an

acquaintanceship of two hours, without running the risk of going too far, and hence of being subjected to rebuke?

But his admiration went far beyond his compassion. He could understand the sacrifice she had made of her own feelings in determining to save her father from any danger of being contradicted or crossed, when, as he was sure to do, he went beyond the bounds of reason in speaking of his daughter's good qualities, or of being suspected of falsehoods, when he passed, as he was also certain to do, the limits of truth in enumerating her virtues and powers, or of being regarded as deficient in that good taste and discretion which all gentlemen exhibit when speaking of members of their families. He could see that she thought it better that the truth in regard to her father should be known, than that anything derogatory to his honor should be alleged against him. Better far to be insane than a liar, a braggart, a snob! A monomaniac she could respect; but for the vulgar, ill-bred, and falsifying knave she could only entertain contempt, even though he were her own father. Such thoughts as these, by which he conceived she had been actuated, were in entire accordance with his own ideas of the fitness of things; hence his readiness to do homage to the courage and high sense of duty she had manifested. He had, it is true, only known her a couple of hours, and considerably less than that time had been passed in her presence. But he began to see that acquaintanceship, like everything else in that part of the country, was a much more rapid process than with the people of Europe among whom he had lived. He knew more of Theodora Willis than he could have acquired of a Polish woman in a hundred times the period of intercourse he had had with her. She had given him her confidence; he would let her see how great was his appreciation of her frankness by acting toward her with equal sincerity.

He was a rapid thinker. His momentary embarrassment

"That is just the idea I have always held. There is nothing of the man about her! No aping of college boys; no longing for trousers, or for smoking cigarettes; no playing base-ball or cricket. She's a 'womanly woman,' and is simply engaged in the effort to develop the female mind in accordance with the requirements of anatomy and physiology. And she will do it, too—mark my words! Woman is every day coming nearer to the front, and ere long must take the lead."

The temptation to reply was great, but Tyscovus remembered what Theodora had told him, and refrained from the expression of any views in opposition to those expressed by the doctor, and in a few moments Theodora returned with a silver tray, holding a delicate little egg-shell tea-pot and cup, from which the aromatic odor of tea arose.

"Now," said the doctor, after he had thanked his daughter for the refreshing beverage, and as he sat in a deep arm-chair with his tea-cup in his hand—"now for my adventures! 'The Gem' is, as you know, Dorie, one of the least reputable of our drinking-saloons. A large number of miners had been discharged, and they had come over here 'to take the town,' as they said. They had plenty of money, and were followed by Luke Kittle and a Mexican named Manuel Vaca, both of whom, it seems, are in love with your friend" (turning to Tyscovus) "Lal Bosler. Kittle and Vaca opened rival gambling-dens, to which the miners repaired, but in far greater numbers to the one kept by Vaca. It seems there was a good deal of bad blood between the two men on account of Lal; and Kittle, besides, felt aggrieved at the fact that Vaca was getting very much more of the 'boys'' money than himself. He therefore closed his den, and, going over to Vaca's place, began betting. It was not long before all his money was in Vaca's possession. Then they all went to 'The Gem,' and while there Kittle accused him of cheating. The

Mexican at once drew a knife, struck at Kittle, missing his blow, however; and the latter, drawing his revolver, shot his rival through the lung.

"When I arrived, I found Vaca sensible, but just about breathing his last. He called for pen, ink, and paper, and a lawyer, and dictated and signed a will, giving all his property, of whatever kind, to me, in trust for Lal Bosler, to be paid to her on her attaining the age of twenty-two. A few minutes afterward he breathed his last. I am informed that the will is perfectly valid, and that Miss Bosler will be worth something over a hundred thousand dollars, in addition to about five thousand found on Vaca's person, which last is doubtless in part the proceeds of his winnings to-night."

"I am very glad for her sake," said Theodora, "but with such a father as she has, the money may do her more harm than good."

"I shall immediately send her East to school, and I shall take good care that none of the money gets into Jim Bosler's hands. Besides, it will be five years yet before Lal can have control of her property, and by that time Mr. Bosler will, in all probability, be holding a high office among the demons of the lower regions."

"I think," said Tyscovus, "that the money is well bestowed, and that Miss Bosler will not be slow to take every advantage that her newly-acquired wealth will give her. She struck me as being a young woman of excellent natural parts."

"So she is—so she is!" exclaimed the doctor. "It is a great wonder to me that with the influences to which she has been subjected she has not gone to the bad long ago. But, come, Dorie, our friend is doubtless tired and sleepy. He has had much to-day to fatigue him. Good Heavens!" he continued, looking at his watch, "it is half-past eleven. Time for all of us to be in bed."

As they were separating for the night at the foot of the hall stairs, Tyscovus glanced at the picture of the anatomical woman that had in the afternoon attracted his attention.

"That is Fräulein Schwartzfeld?" he asked of Theodora, who was engaged in lighting his candle.

"Yes, she painted it herself several years ago, and left it with us as a token of her regard, and, as she said, that we might not forget her."

"I thought—I thought—" said Tyscovus, hesitatingly, and blushing as he spoke.

"You saw it as you came down-stairs this evening!" exclaimed Theodora, laughing, "and you took it for me.—O papa, just think of Mr. Tyscovus taking the Fräulein's portrait for mine!"

The doctor laughed, Theodora laughed, and Tyscovus, who had recovered his presence of mind, laughed with them.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE MORNING AFTER.

THE doctor's residence, to which he had given the Indian name of Chetolah, signifying "sweet repose," was situated in a large park on the outskirts of Hellbender. He had beautified the place in accordance with the principles of good taste, and without regard to expense; for the doctor was a very wealthy man, owning several silver-mines and much real estate, besides being a large stockholder in several banks in Hellbender and Denver. He had built his house in anticipation of seeing it occupied by his wife as its first mistress; but she had died just as the work was finished, and preparations were being made for providing it with every luxury and comfort that money could procure. Without pretending to make a display for the sake of show, everything at Chetolah was conducted with a degree of attention to comfort, and with a quiet elegance, that left nothing to be desired. The doctor was not one of the *nouveaux riches*. He was of an excellent Virginian family, and had always possessed sufficient means to enable him to live in ease and refinement. After his resignation from the army he had settled in Baltimore, and had begun the practice of his profession, but the breaking out of the civil war disturbed the pleasant social relations that had previously existed between him and the best people of that city. For the doctor, though born a Southerner, sympathized with the cause of the Union, while the feeling among the wealthy

and educated classes generally was on the other side. About this time his wife's health became very bad, and this fact, conjoined with the interruption of many ties of friendship and even of blood—for the Union and the secession spirit both ran high—determined him to leave that city and to go to the south of France, in the hope that Mrs. Willis might regain her health and strength. Accordingly he, his wife, and only child—his daughter Theodora—then only seven or eight years of age, went to Nice, where they remained till four years afterward, when Mrs. Willis, having in a measure shaken off the disease with which she suffered, they returned to the United States. But there was nothing of stability in the improvement that had been shown in his wife's health. Her lungs were now seriously involved, and, considering where he could take her with the best prospect of ameliorating her condition, he thought of that mountainous region that has been not inaptly called the "Switzerland of America," and in scouts through which a great part of his early life in the army had been passed. He first made a journey alone to the region in question, and decided that if there was a place on earth at which his wife could regain her health it was Colorado. He accordingly made all the necessary arrangements for removing with his family to a district of the Territory that appeared to him to combine in itself all that was most valuable from a sanitary point of view, and, in a few months, they took up their permanent residence in one of the loveliest spots to be found in that land of paradises. Large deposits of gold and silver were soon afterward discovered on land that, guided by his geological knowledge, he had bought, and a town was laid out on property belonging to him. To this place he one day jokingly gave the name of Hellbender, from the batrachian reptiles found in the vicinity, and the designation, as is often the case in like instances, had stuck to it permanently.

All these pieces of good luck, or good management, or a combination of both, had made Doctor Willis a very wealthy man. Then he had built the house in which he was living when introduced to the reader—a house that, with the immediate surroundings, would have done credit architecturally and æsthetically to an older civilization. It was solidly built of hewed stone, but, though of Gothic style, it was not, as are most structures in which that order is followed, constructed without regard to the comfort of those who were to inhabit it—for it was duly supplied with what are known as the "modern conveniences." Before, however, it was occupied, Mrs. Willis's disease, which had been retarded in its progress by the pure and rarefied atmosphere of the elevated region in which she lived, took fresh start, and, in a few months thereafter, she was carried to her grave. Then the doctor and his daughter were left alone, and things went on, so far as they were concerned, in the way that Theodora had described to Tyscovus.

With Hellbender and its people the inmates of Chetolah had little to do except in the way of business or charity. The doctor's profession, which he had never renounced, notwithstanding his great wealth, brought him into frequent contact with people of all grades of society, and Theodora had numerous works of benevolence that threw her into association either with those who assisted her in her good offices, or those who were the objects of her kindness. As to the town itself little could be said in its favor, except that it felt the influence of the Willises, father and daughter, and hence was far in advance, morally and socially, of similar places in the Territory. Then the doctor had built and equipped a hospital especially for the miners that might be injured in their work or otherwise require its shelter and scientific aid. He had called it ostensibly after Saint Radegundes, but in reality in memory of his wife, whose name was the same as that of the mediæval

queen and saint, and who was probably more worthy of the honors of sanctification than the rather problematical female to whom they had been given. For "Saint Radegundes's Hospital" Theodora had organized a corps of nurses, and spent a good deal of her own time in the wards, either in such medical and surgical work as she could do, or in reading or talking to the patients.

The doctor, regardful of the educational needs of the inhabitants—considering them as he did as being under his special protection—had also instituted a public library and lyceum, which was not only well stocked with books, but at which weekly, during nine months of the year, lectures were delivered by himself and such learned men as he could get hold of, on subjects of popular interest, or upon such scientific matters as were likely, when treated in a non-technical manner, to benefit the people. Several times, he had prevailed on Theodora to lecture, and she had done so, on topics that were specially calculated to interest and instruct the female portion of the population.

The morning following the events referred to in the preceding chapter, was one that revealed the beauty of the situation of Chetolah and the grandeur of the surrounding scenery in all their glory and impressiveness. Tyscovus rose early, and after drinking a cup of chocolate brought to his room by a servant that must have been on the watch to discover the precise moment at which he left his bed, and a plunge into the bath-tub, cut from a single piece of marble that stood in the dressing-room attached to his chamber, he arrayed himself in as tasteful a manner as was possible under the circumstances, and betook himself to the grounds surrounding the house. The whole landscape was in shadow, for the sun had not yet risen above the mountain that reared its snow-clad summit fifteen thousand feet above the surrounding country; but it lit up with its golden rays a peak that stood far off to the

west, and that formed a gorgeous object, as the snow and ice, crowning its topmost crags, glittered as though it were a coronet of diamonds. The air was cool, but it was invigorating, and he drew it into his lungs in great gulps, as though every inspiration caused him a positive pleasure. Then, as he had still two hours to spare before breakfast, he resolved to walk to the town and make some inquiries in regard to his wagon, which he thought it just possible might by this time have arrived at Hellbender. The distance was not over a mile to the business center, and it took him only a few minutes, with his long, swinging gait, to traverse it. Here, he found, upon seeking information of a policeman —who was one of the ten that constituted the force upon which the civil power of Hellbender relied for protection— that the wagon on its arrival would probably be put up at the "Mountain Hotel," a hostelry much affected by teamsters and the agricultural portion of the population, the miners going by preference to the "Bullion House."

On repairing to the inn named he found that, in fact, his wagon had arrived the night before, and that the teamster was then engaged in hitching up preparatory to starting out on his last day's journey. His horses had turned out better than had been anticipated, and would doubtless reach the butte in the course of the afternoon. His visit, therefore, to Chetolah would be considerably shortened from the period he and the doctor had estimated; for he should be obliged to return that day to the butte, in order to take care of his property.

During his walk back, his thoughts recurred, as they often had done that morning, to the conversation with Theodora of the night before. The more he considered the details of what she had told him, the more he was brought round to the belief that there were many phases of the "woman question" that he had not fully examined, and of which he had very insufficient knowledge.

Tyscovus was a fair-minded man. He never did intentional and deliberate injustice to any one, either in thought or deed, and when he had been wrong no one was ever more ready than he to confess his error, and make the proper amends. He was not yet quite convinced in regard to several of the points brought forward by Theodora, or, at least, inferentially touched upon by her. He was willing to admit that he had been too absolute in some of his beliefs; that in the matter of anatomy, for instance, it was possible for a pure-minded girl to dissect a man's body without losing any of the delicate bloom of maidenhood. He was also ready to concede that those women that desired to adopt the profession of medicine could frequent the dissecting-room without impropriety, and, by so doing, aid in making themselves useful members of society. But he would not want to have such women for his acquaintances or friends, and he certainly would not think of loving or marrying a woman of that description. Still, he was in favor of all women that had arrived at years of discretion being allowed the utmost liberty of selection, when their subsistence or their happiness was in question. No one, he thought, had any right to say to such a woman, "you shall or you shall not" study this or that science. There were certain laws of anatomy and physiology that could not be superseded or infringed with impunity. If woman's ideas of self-development led her to attempt work that was above her powers, or to assume functions for which Nature never intended her, all such efforts could result only in failure and discomfiture. The experiment might, however, be a costly one, and in the mean time we should seek, by a thorough study of woman's physical and mental organization, to ascertain the limits beyond which it would not be safe for her to go.

And as regarded Theodora, never had he, in all his varied experience, met with a woman that had so impressed

him with a sense of her truth and honesty. Her determination, formed apparently on the instant, to inform him of her father's monomania before he should misjudge him, or discover it for himself, struck him as being the noblest piece of work he had ever known a woman to perform.

And then how sweetly and powerfully she had argued in defense of the right of a woman to seek knowledge wherever it was to be found! Ah! if all women were as pure-minded as Theodora; if all women were as strongly fenced about with faith in themselves, and devotion to science as was she—then all women, so far as he could perceive, might dissect any animal, from man down, to be found in the whole range of creation, and be all the better for the act.

His mind reverted to the doctor. Strange, he thought, that on all subjects, but this one of his daughter and "woman's rights," he should be so thoroughly sound, as his conversation showed him to be, and yet on that one should be so completely deranged! But was that really the only evidence of mental aberration that the doctor exhibited? How was it possible to reconcile the fact of a gentleman, with a stake in the world such as he had, a man whose whole sympathies would, as a natural thing, be on the side of law and order, as one must think his would be, enrolling himself as a member of a vigilance committee, and plotting the illegal execution of certain citizens who, if of bad repute, were yet entitled to lawful trial! What awful inconsistency was there here! A man of science, a member of a profession whose duty it was to save life, sanctioning by his influence and presence the taking of life by methods unknown to the law! This was to Tyscovus almost as strong an indication of the doctor's lunacy as the exaggerated character of his opinions of his daughter and the position of woman. In this opinion, however, he showed his ignorance of the American mind, which looks upon all political power as

springing directly from the people, and being delegated by them to certain officers, to be exercised for the public good. Hence, when there is a general lack of ability, or an indisposition to make use of this power, or when criminals are so bold and numerous as to defy the law, or when from any other cause the laws against crime are impossible of enforcement, they do not hesitate to resume the power that they have, as it were, loaned to their servants, and to execute justice upon wrong-doers. If crime were as rampant in any Eastern city as it was in California in its early days, or in other of our Western Territories in the beginnings of their political careers, vigilance committees would certainly come into vogue. Indeed, the propriety of their organization has more than once been seriously considered by prominent citizens of the city of New York.

Before he had got half through his meditations, he found himself at the entrance of the doctor's grounds, and, before he reached the house, that gentleman was out on the lawn to meet him.

"Ah, my friend," he exclaimed, as Tyscovus approached, "I intended to be up this morning early enough to show you some of our strong points before breakfast, but you got the start of me. The fact is, I went to bed very tired, and then I am at least ten years older than you, and hence require more sleep. But where have you been?"

"I took the opportunity afforded by you and Miss Willis being still asleep to walk over to Hellbender to look after my wagon. I found it had arrived last night, with horses and contents in good condition, and that it will reach the butte to-day. This will require me to take myself away from your hospitalities several days sooner than we expected."

"I am sorry for that, and so will Theodora be when she hears of it. I know she was looking forward with great pleasure to showing you her laboratory. However, there is no such hurry as that. You can stay till late this

afternoon, and then I will drive you over. Your wagon can not well reach there before this evening."

"Thanks! That will suit me admirably, for I assure you I am very anxious to know something of Miss Willis's plans of study."

"Then that is settled! You will also have time to examine the plans of a building I am about erecting, in commemoration of the more notable of those women that, in different periods of the world's history, have performed acts of heroism or that have been prominent in politics."

"There are many such, I have no doubt," said Tyscovus, encouragingly, for he perceived that the doctor was verging on the subject of his aberration.

"Many! My dear fellow, there are thousands! But I have records of all, and I shall select about five hundred. I shall have their names cut in letters of gold in the grand hall of the building, and Theodora's will stand first. My wife was a good woman, a true wife, but she was not heroic, and never shone in politics; but Theodora has made her mark in both these spheres. She has saved lives at the risk of her own, and she has drawn up several bills that have passed the Legislature and are now laws."

"You are to be congratulated on having such a daughter," said Tyscovus, with sincerity, though with different reasons in his mind from those the doctor alleged.

"Yes, but what troubles me most now is the idea that I must some day make up my mind to losing her. She will marry, I suppose. Not here, for there is not a man in the Territory I would give her to, or that she would take. But every summer, when we go East, it is the specter that I see constantly before me. Yet it will come, and I shall not oppose my will against hers. Every woman should marry; an unmarried woman is only in a low state of development. Her evolution is not completed. When Theo-

dora marries, there will be a perfect woman, and then the world will possess what it never yet has possessed. But come! she is waiting breakfast for us, and when you have replenished the inner man with a cup of coffee, made after an ingenious process of her devising, she will show you her laboratory."

Fortunately, the doctor's statements in regard to Theodora's perfections were rarely of such a character as to require an answer. He appeared to be so firmly convinced of the absolute correctness of all his assertions, that the concurrence of others was unnecessary. A difference of opinion would not in the least have lessened his confidence in the absolute integrity of his judgment, but it would have irritated him, for the reasons, in the first place, that he would have been convinced that the doubter was a fool, and he was always intolerant of stupid people; and, in the second place, because it would have been a reflection upon the accuracy of his statements, and this was another thing he could not endure. While Tyscovus would certainly not, in any event, have contradicted him, he doubtless would have been led, but for Theodora's warning, to express more or less doubt of the correctness of some of the doctor's views. Although even this would have been done in the most delicate and unirritating manner, as befitted a guest arguing with his host, the effect would certainly have been unpleasant. It was a relief to his mind, however, when the doctor suggested breakfast, and they went into the house, where Theodora was awaiting them.

Perhaps there is no better test of a woman's health and beauty than her appearance when she presents herself at an early breakfast-table. She is then more as Nature made her than at any other period of the day, when art has been brought in with a view of heightening her charms. If she has slept well, it argues, to some extent, a sound nervous system, and the effect is seen in the brightness of her eyes

and the tone possessed by the muscles of the face and neck. Her movements are full of grace, for her limbs have been refreshed and strengthened by repose, and her mind is clear and bright, for it also has rested, and there have been no bad dreams to exhaust her nervous system and make her limp and haggard. Her intelligence is then at its maximum, and she feels the mental recklessness that is so generally the result of sound, healthy sleep, and that is only a natural elation of the emotions, pleasant, doubtless, for her to exhibit, but far more pleasant to those to whom it is manifested. If, on the contrary, she has slept badly, or has suffered from nightmare in consequence of a feeble digestive system, her eyes are weak, dim, and watery, her face is flabby, her head appears to be held unsteadily on her shoulders, for it droops on her chest, or bobs helplessly from side to side, her complexion is dull and blotchy, red where it ought not to be red, and pale where it ought not to be pale. Her expression is indicative of the discomfort she has undergone during the night, her movements are either painfully slow or aggravatingly brusque, her intellect shows stupidity, her emotions are torpid, her perceptions dull.

While the woman that is in good physical health exhibits all the beauty in the early morning that her features are capable of expressing, the one whose organic life is deranged is at this period of the day at her worst. There is no better test of a woman's health than her ability to eat a hearty breakfast, and it might almost be said that her physical beauty is in direct proportion to the amount of beefsteak or mutton-chops she can put into herself at this meal. Certainly, pretty women can always eat a hearty breakfast.

Theodora had already been in the garden, and was arranging on the breakfast-table the flowers she had gathered, when the gentlemen entered the room. She looked up with a happy smile as she bade Tyscovus "good-morn-

ing." "The cold nights are playing sad havoc with my flowers," she said, "but here are two buds from a rose-bush that grows under a wall, with a southern exposure. One for you," she continued, fastening it in the button-hole of her father's coat, "and one for you," doing the same graceful office for Tyscovus. "Now we will sit down to breakfast."

If Tyscovus had thought her beautiful when he first saw her, he was enraptured with her now. Evidently *she* had slept well, evidently *she* had not been visited by nightmare, for she was bright and joyous in mind, while her physical loveliness could not have been more perfect if Venus herself had officiated at her toilet. He felt that it was well that to-day was to end his visit to Chetolah. To fall in love at this time would be, in his opinion, the most deplorable event that could happen to him. It would not only be destructive of all the plans he had laid out for himself, but it would be an act disgracefully weak, and one that would cause him to fall immensely in his own estimation. Moreover, his judgment told him that Theodora Willis would not be a proper person for him to marry. He had reached the point at which he could endure in woman the possession of a desire for knowledge, even when it went to the extent of studying medicine and dissecting human bodies; but he did not go so far as to admit for a moment that any such woman would be a suitable wife for him. She might please some men, but he was not one of them. And yet he had not sat five minutes at the breakfast-table before he knew, with absolute certainty, that if he were to be thrown much into the company of Theodora Willis, he should lose his head. He was now master of the situation. He could go back to his house on the butte and shut himself up from all the world, but he knew the danger of association, and that further intercourse would deprive him of the power over himself that he now possessed.

Already he felt ashamed of himself that, after so short a time, he should be obliged to confess that there was peril, and that, too, from a species of woman he had always held in disesteem.

Both Theodora and her father were earnest in their expressions of regret at his early departure, and then the conversation turned on the killing of Manuel Vaca, and the good fortune that had befallen Lal Bosler. Certain legal formalities in regard to the will had yet to be complied with, and, as it had been executed in the presence of the lawyer and the doctor only, the latter determined that he would not make its provisions public till it had been admitted to probate, and the matter thus placed beyond doubt. So far as was known, Vaca had no relatives; but then it often happens that a person dying apparently without relatives, and leaving a large amount of money, has dozens of devoted uncles, aunts, and especially cousins, springing up to claim kinship with the dear departed.

"But," said Tyscovus, "I don't think you told us what became of Kittle after he had killed Vaca, except that the latter's thrust with his knife had not injured him."

"No, he was not touched—which, to say the least, was a great misfortune. When these gentlemen fight, it is generally to be desired that as many of them as possible shall be killed; but, in this instance, the better of the two received his quietus, while the bigger villain escaped. Indeed, Don Manuel was not a bad sort of a fellow for this part of the country. He did not steal, and never used his knife or pistol except in the heat of blood. Of course, his slayer will escape. He will probably not even be arrested, and, if he is, it will be easy for him to prove that he acted in self-defense, and that Vaca made a murderous assault upon him. Still, 'The Gulcher,' as he is generally called, was so manifestly the aggressor, that perhaps the vigilance committee, which is about organizing a more complete sys-

tem for preserving order, will take his case in hand. There is a meeting to-night."

"Which you will attend?" said Tyscovus, inquiringly.

"Oh, yes; I am a kind of a balance-wheel to the committee, which, though composed of our best citizens, has several hot spirits in it that are rather disposed to be too sweeping in their actions. We shall proceed very guardedly, and entirely in the direction of obtaining relief from a set of scoundrels from which the laws, copied after those of older countries, and hence ill adapted to our requirements, are powerless to protect us."

"I suppose it is all necessary," replied Tyscovus, after a little reflection, "but it strikes me, a foreigner, as a singular state of affairs that requires a staid and enlightened citizen like you to belong to an unlawful body like this vigilance committee."

"So it is," replied the doctor, with animation—"so it is a very singular state of affairs; such a condition, probably, as the world has never before witnessed, and for which it is entirely unprepared. But you forget the innate spirit of self-reliance found in the Anglo-Saxon race, and that is still further developed in its American descendants. It is always ready for emergencies, and when the laws are inadequate it at once attemps to grasp the situation and to provide a remedy. It is very evident to me and all good citizens that if the present state of affairs continues much longer, anarchy will prevail. It is to obviate such a condition that we have formed the vigilance committee, and already its influence can be perceived."

"Yes, it is a magnificent stock to come from," rejoined Tyscovus. "We Slavs are a different people altogether. When we settle a new country, as we have occasionally done, we do it with soldiers and under martial law. Perhaps we have more order, but we do not develop, and our peace is the peace of slavery."

"At the meeting to-night," continued the doctor, "I shall make a proposition that may at first excite some difference of opinion, but that I am sure will be eventually concurred in, and that is that Theodora shall be the president of the committee. She has such a fund of common sense, and is so well acquainted with the peculiarities of human nature as they are developed under different circumstances, that I am confident she would be the best executive officer the committee could have."

Tyscovus could only listen in astonishment to this remarkable idea. Here was a man, reasoning clearly and with exactness upon all other subjects, and yet proposing in cold blood to make his daughter, a young and beautiful girl, the president of an organization that intended to make short shrift with the criminal class, and the operations of which would certainly be attended with danger to the lives of those engaged in them. This was going further than he had conceived it possible for the doctor, monomaniac as he undoubtedly was, to go. He expected to see Theodora exhibit in every look, and gesture, and word, her repugnance to a scheme so utterly fatal to her womanliness, but, to his intense surprise, and even disappointment, she took the proposal as a matter of course, although expressing her desire to avoid its acceptance on the ground of her time being already occupied.

"You know, papa," she said, "that the experiments in evolution require a great deal of attention, and that if I am elected president of the vigilance committee I should have to be always ready to respond to any call that might be made. The chief officer of such a body should be constantly prepared to act in the interest of the public safety, and I am afraid that, with my present duties, I should not be as efficient as the necessities of the case might require. I should not like to fail in anything I undertook."

"Perhaps you are right, Dorie," replied her father, co-

inciding at once with her views. "I should not like you to neglect the experiments, and, when I come to think of it, attention to them must require all your time. You are right, as you always are, but it is a great pity, nevertheless, that we shall have to do without you."

This, then, was the way in which she managed him! No violent opposition, no indignation, no positive refusal, but a skillful interposition of such objections, urged with apparent reluctance, as entirely disarmed, without irritating him. Tyscovus could not sufficiently admire her coolness and discretion, the infinite tact that she exhibited—a skill that, like that of the experienced angler, does not prompt to violent and sudden jerks of the line to which the fish is hooked, and that might result in the loss of the captured animal, but that is exhibited in gentleness and seeming yielding, while all the time the victim is being, almost imperceptibly to itself, drawn from the water. It was science instead of brute force in the one instance, tact against clumsy violence in the other.

"Now," said the doctor, as they rose from the table, "while I go off and look after my patients, you will have an opportunity to see some of Theodora's work. I shall return in time for dinner at two o'clock, for we dine early here, and then, if you *will* go, I shall drive you over to the butte." With which words he kissed his daughter a good-by, bowed to Tyscovus, and was gone.

CHAPTER XIV.

"THEY HAVE COME!"

"Now, Miss Willis," said Tyscovus, as they went into the library, a large room on the other side of the hall, the walls of which were, half-way to the ceiling, covered with well-stocked book-cases, "I am full of interest to see something of your daily life. All this is so new to me that I am sure you will pardon my anxiety."

"You are a student," rejoined Theodora, "and hence you have a natural desire to know how other students work. I am afraid you will not find much in the way of results."

"Your studies are so unfamiliar to me that whatever I find will be interesting. I know very little of natural history; scarcely anything of physiology—little, in fact, of man or animals as individuals. My chief studies have been in the direction of ethnology, and the development of nations in the arts and sciences, and in sociology. I have laid out a good deal of work for myself, and I came here for the purpose of doing it."

"I do not know, then, that I can show you much that will interest you; still, there may be a little, and if you will come with me into the next room I will expose all my poverty to you."

She led the way into an apartment so far isolated that it was a sort of a wing to the main building, being connected with it only on one side, and there by a long passage. This arrangement was, as she said, adopted in order

to obviate all danger of fire, and to lesson the liability of noxious vapors getting into the inhabited parts of the house.

It was a room about twenty feet square into which she conducted her guest. It was built of brick and paved with encaustic tiles. It was lighted both by a sky-light and by windows on all three of its exposed sides. At one end was a brick furnace, at the other, under a window with a northern exposure, a table, on which was a large microscope, covered with a bell-glass. Around the room were cases and tables containing bottles and various kinds of chemical and physiological apparatus, and in one corner was an enormous electrical machine. Altogether, it had the appearance to Tyscovus of being a well-equipped chemical, physical, and physiological laboratory, one amply sufficient for the carrying on of original researches in these departments of science. In a large bay-window, of which not only the sides, but the top, were of glass, and that was so situated that the rays of the sun were on it nearly all day, stood a solidly constructed iron table. The top had a ledge running all around it, so that it had the appearance of a tray of some four or five inches deep. This was filled with sand. On this sand rested a glass case of the dimensions of five by ten feet, and in the case were two enormous snakes. Two pipes led into the case, one from an air-chamber, which was heated by the furnace, and another from an arrangement consisting of retorts and receivers. The mouths of these pipes, as they opened into the glass case, were covered with fine wire gauze. Tyscovus at once surmised that this was the apparatus with which the experiments in evolution were being conducted, and, as he had considerable knowledge of chemistry, he was able to obtain, from a slight examination, a tolerably full idea of the nature of the investigations. He pretended, however, to a less knowledge than he really possessed, for he was anxious to hear Theo-

dora herself describe the researches she was conducting. A word of inquiry met with a ready response.

"As you know," she said, "many years ago, Lamarck, the real author of the development hypothesis, said that in all probability birds were evolved from fishes; that the latter, through countless ages, had been cast ashore by storms or tides, and that the struggles they made in the effort to get back, had, in the lapse of time, continued as they were through myriads of generations, led to the development of wings and the alterations of the other parts of the body to the extent necessary to change them from aquatic to atmospheric animals. Perhaps this was a stretch of the imagination far beyond our powers of belief, but that Lamarck's idea was right few naturalists of the present day have any doubt. It is acknowledged that organs are developed in accordance with the necessities of the situations in which living beings are placed.

"Being a firm believer in the development hypothesis, as originated by Lamarck and elaborated with such thoroughness by Darwin, the idea occurred to me that it might be possible, under extraordinary circumstances, to obtain indubitable evidence of its correctness, and this from actual experiment.

"In the first place, it was necessary to select such animals as might, from their structure, undergo changes from one species, genus, or order to another, without too great a strain on their powers of development being required. Changes from one species to another species would not be sufficiently striking, and the conditions under which they could be obtained are not sufficiently well known. The like is true of genera. The attempt to change one class into a higher class would obviously require too long a time, even if the conditions were known. Certainly no investigations in the direction of the theory of birds being developed from fishes were possible. Besides, the zoölogical dis-

tance between these two classes is so great as to render it extremely doubtful if they bear any direct developmental relation to each other.

"It is true there are fish that leave the water, crawl upon the land, and even climb trees, and there are the so-called flying-fish. There are several genera, also, that make nests similar to those constructed by birds; but, even if I could have obtained any of these kinds, the practical difficulties in the way of their development would have been insuperable.

"Thinking upon the subject, it one day occurred to me that it has been pointed out that there are great analogies between reptiles and birds, and that at a former period of the world's history the resemblances were still more striking among some of the representatives of each class then on the earth than exist now. It appeared to me, then, as being extremely probable that birds have been developed from reptiles, and my first idea was to institute a series of experiments for the purpose of showing whether or not this supposition was correct. Further reflection, however, convinced me that a very long time would be required, extending probably through many generations, before any definite results could be obtained either for or against the theory. The analogy existing between certain orders of reptiles was then suggested to me, and I reflected upon the fact that very striking transformations ensue in the course of the life of certain members of some of them. I called to mind the analogies that are found present between snakes and lizards; how some lizards have no feet, and how some snakes have rudimentary feet. The lizard is doubtless a higher order of being than a snake, and it might be possible to change a snake into a lizard, or, at least, to obtain some evidence that such a change is possible. The thought then came to me that the common black snake of the country has rudimentary ventral limbs, and I determined, therefore, to ascertain how far I could, by the

operation of certain agents, cause these appendages to be still further developed."

"It was admirably thought out," said Tyscovus, who had listened intently to every word and had followed closely Theodora's reasoning. "You appear to have gone to work in the most systematic manner, and if you do not succeed it will be either because the time is too short, or that the influences you have brought to bear upon the process have been insufficient in power. We see that, under the demands of the system, the fur of animals becomes thicker in winter, so as to afford them increased protection from the cold, and thinner in summer, so as to allow them to get rid of their heat more readily. I perceive no reason why, under the stimulus of the proper factors, legs should not be developed in snakes. The necessity for them would first, however, have to be created. I am curious to know what agents you employed."

"You shall hear. I knew that snakes, like other reptiles, were cold-blooded animals, and I was also aware, from some experiments of my own, that the temperature of lizards is slightly above that of serpents. My object was to convert a snake into a lizard, and therefore one point to be provided for was a method for securing a due supply of heat to the snakes. Here," she continued, going over to where the case with the snakes stood, "is the arrangement by which that object is attained. As you see, this pipe comes from the furnace and transmits heated air to the case. Ventilation is provided for by the opening at the top. Of course, it was important that the heat should never be excessive. After a good many experiments, I ascertained that a steady temperature of ninety-five degrees, Fahrenheit, met the object in view, and by means of this automatic arrangement it is always maintained at that point. Whenever it rises above ninety-five, this valve in the pipe closes; when it falls below that standard, the valve opens, so that

you perceive there is always a uniform temperature inside the case."

Tyscovus made a minute examination of the mechanism by which this important object was secured, and expressed the greatest admiration of its effectiveness and simplicity.

"This could as well be applied to houses as to this case," he said, after he had studied every detail.

"Yes, I have it in operation at the 'Lyceum.' We can secure any temperature we desire there. It is only necessary to set the apparatus at the degree required, and then that is maintained all the time.

"Well," she continued, "having provided for the regulation of the heat, the next point was the acceleration of the movements of the snakes in the case so as to create a 'demand,' so to speak, for the legs. Two ways of doing this occurred to me, and I adopted them both. They are oxygen gas and electricity. The oxygen is supplied from the receiver, which, as you see, communicates with the interior of the case by this pipe. At stated periods during the day and night the valve is opened and the gas is admitted. The effect is very striking, as you will perceive, for I am now going to give them a dose."

The snakes, two enormous reptiles, each probably five feet in length, lay sluggishly on the floor of the cage. They were not asleep, for every now and then their forked tongues were darted forward and their heads moved slowly and regularly, as though keeping time to music. Theodora turned the valve of one of the pipes leading into the case. The influence of the stimulating gas that the reptiles were now obliged to inhale was almost immediately perceived. At first, they simultaneously moved their tails and began to coil and uncoil their long, polished bodies. Then they appeared to be tied together in a series of intricate, living knots that twisted themselves into an infinite variety of contortions, while their heads darted here and there, their

eyes flashed, and their forked tongues moved with a velocity that rendered them almost invisible. Finally, each serpent appeared to arrive at the determination of acting independently. They untwisted themselves from their apparently inextricable combinations, and glided around the floor of the case as though animated by a force that they could not resist, and that therefore carried them, in spite of themselves, through their rapid circumvolutions. Round and round they went, sometimes chasing each other, sometimes abreast, but always in motion, till Tyscovus, as he looked at them, felt his brain grow dizzy in sympathy with the swiftly-moving reptiles, as they swept on in their ceaseless rounds.

"Now," said Theodora, placing her hand on a valve at the opposite side of the case, "I will close this opening for a few moments, so as to prevent the entrance of atmospheric air, while the oxygen, continuing to flow in, will soon fill the case, and the snakes will be subjected to the still more potent influence of the non-diluted gas." With a slight motion of her fingers she shut the valve. For a few seconds the snakes appeared to glide on in their circuitous courses with, if possible, increased velocity, and their eyes to shine with augmented brilliancy. Then they seemed to have reached their climax, for both straightened themselves out at full length, while their bodies swelled and diminished in size as they inhaled and expired the blood-stirring gas. But the stupor was only temporary, such as might—as it probably was—have been produced by an overpowering agent that had for the moment, before the system could adapt itself to the situation, stunned every faculty of the body. Then a strange thing took place: each snake, one after the other, deliberately raised itself and crawled up one of the glass sides of the case till it reached the top. Then it slowly and cautiously, as though afraid of falling, crept around the case, sliding its body along, not

with the undulating movements of a snake, but with a straightforward motion like that of an arrow when shot from the bow. Tyscovus had never seen anything so peculiar in all his life, and he stood lost in astonishment at the singular spectacle before him.

"It is very wonderful," he said, "but do they never execute this movement except in an atmosphere of non-diluted oxygen?"

"Never, and it is only within the last ten days that these movements have been produced. But, while they are clinging to the glass, let me show you how the electricity reaches them. Experiments have shown that if the two poles of a galvanic battery be stuck into the earth at opposite points of a box in which a flower, for instance, is planted, that the growth is much more rapid than it is in another plant of the same kind and size, and similarly situated, but that has no galvanism supplied to it. Acting on this knowledge, I arranged a galvanic battery of one hundred cells, and connected the poles in the way you see here with the sand in which the case rests. As you see, the legs of this table are of glass, and the sand in the iron tray is kept constantly wet. The bottom of the case is of wood, and, as it rests in the wet sand, it absorbs water, and is hence made a good conductor. The arrangement prevents the snakes coming in direct contact with the poles, and hence receiving a sudden shock; while the electricity, being prevented by the glass legs from escaping into the earth, is diffused through the iron top, the sand, and the wood, and thus continually, though gently, acts on the animals."

"It is admirable! You are a born experimenter, Miss Willis. You know how to originate, to plan, and to execute. You are one of the very few women I have encountered that could do these things, and you surpass them all. You possess that rarest quality of woman—originality."

"Ah, that is only because I have had a chance to work. There are thousands of women that could do as well, or better, if they had the opportunities. But their education is so hampered with absurd restrictions that their progress is almost impossible. Why should knowledge on any subject be restricted to one or the other sex?"

Tyscovus did not answer; he was engaged in closely examining the snakes, which still clung to the glass.

"You are looking for the legs," continued Theodora. "We have had several false alarms, for I have had a watch kept on the case night and day, but in each instance the wish was father to the thought. No, they have not come yet."

"But they have!" cried Tyscovus, excitedly. "Each snake has a pair of well-defined legs, with feet and claws emerging from the skin, apparently. See, Miss Willis! there can be no doubt about the fact. I congratulate you most heartily. You will now become a famous woman," with which words he held out his hand to Theodora, who gave him hers in return.

"Yes," she said, examining the snakes, "you are right. There is a pair of ventral extremities developed on each. I am very glad, and I am glad that you were the first to discover them." Then she blushed and withdrew her hand, which, in her preoccupation of mind, she had allowed Tyscovus to retain for a moment longer than was absolutely necessary.

"I look upon this," said Tyscovus, whose face still exhibited the satisfaction he felt, "as the greatest event in connection with life that has ever occurred within the knowledge of man. You have, indeed, been highly favored. But no! that is the stereotyped way of congratuing the successful. You have commanded the results by your admirable forethought, your knowledge of the requirements of the subject, and your indefatigable energy. The

honor and glory are yours, and yours alone, for nothing has been left to chance."

For nearly an hour they continued to converse on the great fact that had been accomplished by the intelligence and perseverance that Theodora had brought to bear upon her investigation. Tyscovus was quick to perceive the important bearing it would have on his work, the nature and scope of which he promised to explain to her on a future occasion. Then, after she had exhibited several other arrangements of the laboratory, that were admirably adapted to original researches in several departments of science, they went back to the library.

It was only then that Tyscovus fully returned to himself, and recollected that in a few hours he would go back to his own solitary home on the butte, and begin the labors that were to keep him in isolation for months, perhaps years. Upon one or two occasions, as we have seen, he had, when under the influence of impulse, felt inclined to give up his work and to return to Poland; but he had not before experienced a distinct idea of so doing, nor had he conceived any repugnance to the task he had given himself. Now, however, he began to feel a decided dislike for the butte, and to entertain a doubt relative to the necessity for the book he was going to write, and, consequently, of the wisdom of writing it. Here was a woman, ten years his junior, that, in the wilds of the Rocky Mountains and the Sierra Madre, had done more for the establishment of a hypothesis of infinite importance to humanity than he, with all his studies and other advantages, had been able to accomplish! The thought caused him a little sense of humiliation—not envy, for he was a frank, generous, magnanimous man, who was thoroughly incapable of so mean a feeling; but there was just the least touch of self-reproach and chagrin that he had overlooked so grand an opportunity for distinction and usefulness. While he had

been busying himself with theories and abstractions; while he had been using the researches of others as bases for his ideas, this girl, with her innate tendency to originality and intense spirit of investigation, had practically settled a question of which the whole world had been waiting the solution. And yet, it has been said, and he had been one of the most strenuous supporters of the doctrine, that woman was incapable of abstract thought, and was devoid of originality! Evidently he could learn much from such a woman, and clearly there was yet much for him to learn before he would know enough to warrant him in beginning a work that was to serve, he had fondly hoped, as a guide for mankind in some of the most important functions of humanity.

But this was not all. He could not conceal from himself, as he sat with Theodora in the library, listening to her musical voice, and watching the varied expressions that passed over her countenance, that this girl was in the incipiency of exercising an influence over him of a very different kind from that that one scientist usually exercises over another.

When he had told her he "loved" her, he had used an English word in its Polish, and, in fact, its Continental sense; but now he began to experience, in a tenfold degree of intensity, the fears that had come upon him that morning, and that had caused him to resolve to leave Chetolah immediately, and to shut himself off from the rest of the world in his isolated dwelling. He knew that every time he saw Theodora the feeling that gave birth to his fears would be deepened, till at length she would be the one sole object to fill his heart. This would be an absolute destruction of all the ends he had had in view, and must be prevented at all hazards. There was but one way to do this, and that he had already determined upon. As to the pain he should suffer, that it would be severe he knew very

well, but all mental suffering, unlike that of the body, is lessened with time, and to time he would trust. In the midst of his reflections, he said with an abruptness that evinced his earnestness, "As this is the last time, Miss Willis, that I shall be permitted to enjoy your society—"

"The last time!" exclaimed Theodora, interrupting him; "why, it is only a few minutes ago that you promised to tell me all about the book you are writing, and of the studies to which you have given your life."

"That is true, Miss Willis," he answered, bitterly, "and you will not be surprised at the change in my determination when I tell you that I have been generally known among my relatives and friends as 'John Buridan's Ass,' and that the name was given to me in consequence of my inability to make a decision."

"But it was a wrong one," said Theodora, laughing, "for it seems to me that it is not the inability to come to a determination that is a characteristic, but a tendency to form too many decisions; now 'John Buridan's Ass,' if I recollect aright, was supposed by some to have died of thirst and starvation, because he could not decide whether to eat or drink first. Now you—I beg your pardon for the supposition—would have drunk a little, and then have eaten a little, and then have drunk a little more, and so on, till you had swallowed all the water and all the hay."

"You have hit it exactly," replied Tyscovus, "and that is just what I imagine the ass did—unless, indeed, he was a bigger ass than any other of the species. Doubtless I shall change my present determination, and, if I do, no one will rejoice more than myself." He uttered these last words with considerable bitterness, and, rising, walked to the window and looked out on the lawn as though to conceal the expression of his face.

"My friend," said Theodora, with a world of sympathy in her voice, "I think your views of life are morbid. They

are not such as a man like you, of sound mental and physical health, should hold. They are the offspring of a life that has doubtless had its regrets and its sorrows, but that is, if I do not greatly mistake, sound to the core. I have no right to advise you; indeed, you would in your present frame of mind reject any counsel I might offer. Go back, therefore, to your home on the butte. Enlarge your vision of life so as to comprehend something more than your own part, and leave the rest to your own good sense. And when you think I can assist you, when you have, by your own unaided reflections, brought yourself to the belief that any words of mine might be of service to you, let me know."

"There is nothing you could say to me now or at any other time," said Tyscovus, turning from the window and approaching Theodora, "that would fall upon heedless ears. Speak!" he continued, passionately. "I am ashamed of myself, of my past, my present, my future, of every aim I have ever had in life, of all the results I have ever obtained, of all—"

"No, no!" interrupted Theodora, warmly; "that is surely not true. You are speaking impulsively and from the stand-point of comparing what you have accomplished with what you think I have done. Perhaps it is well for every one to underestimate his own acts, but you carry the process further than is just to yourself or to others. You forget for the moment the stores of facts you have accumulated, and that you will some day use for the benefit of the world, even if you have not already done so. But what is worse," she continued, "you place too high a value on the poor learning I have been able to acquire. If I were a man, you would see nothing surprising in the fact that I am something of a student, and have picked up here and there a smattering of knowledge. But because I am a woman, and women generally are not students of science, you form an idea of my position altogether unwarranted by the facts.

I am not one of those that think women the equals intellectually of man; I am simply one that desires to make the most of the humble gifts that God has given her, and that thinks that man should place no obstacles in the way of her advancement. But I am not going to discuss the subject with you now. If we should meet again after you have fairly begun your work, and have entered upon the solitude that you imagine you require, we will return to it. But now, if you think you would enjoy a walk, let me show you a spring the water of which is almost as cold as ice, and another, within ten feet of it, in which you can boil an egg."

CHAPTER XV.

"GO, AND SIN NO MORE!"

BEFORE the cabin at Bighorn Spring was built, Lal Bosler had frequently visited the place in company with her father, who had a small flock of sheep that he pastured in the meadow. She was, therefore, well acquainted with the locality, and with its relative position to the butte, and had been accustomed to take the path connecting the two places, which was shorter, by over two miles, than the wagon-road that they had traversed on bidding a final farewell to the old residence.

Entering the timber at the back of the cabin, Lal went on through a dense forest for about a mile, when she emerged into the open prairie at the foot of a high table-land. Like other formations in that region, the side was an inclined plain consisting of gravel and moderate-sized bowlders, and had evidently, even to Lal's ungeological eyes, formed at one time or other the bank of an immense lake. Indeed, in all directions, as she looked around when half-way up the side, she could see similar formations, so that the prairie and the forest formed a large plateau that, sunk as it was, some four or five hundred feet below the tops of the table-lands, and shut in on all sides by their frowning heights, looked, for all the world, like what it doubtless had been, the bed of a large lake. In her journeys from the one place to the other, Lal had often picked up shells that, though she had no idea of the full purport

of their presence so far from water, nevertheless brought to her mind the fact that, at some time or other, water had been where there was now a steep and dry hill-side.

The ascent was by no means easy, and she frequently stopped to rest, sitting down at such times on the largest bowlder near her, and looking below at the extensive basin shut in on every side by walls such as the one she was climbing. She could not see the cabin she had left, for it stood, as we know, immediately on the edge of the timber, and was hence concealed by the forest that intervened. But she could trace out the road taken by her father when he set out for The Cañon, till it entered the woods on the opposite side of the prairie, and she could see far off, over plain and forest, The Cañon itself, though the houses at its mouth were, at that distance, indistinguishable. Finally, she reached the top, a broad, flat surface, extending in one direction some eight or ten miles, but only about half a mile wide at the place where she designed crossing it.

It did not take her long to traverse the table-land, or *mesa*, as it, and others like it, were called in the country, and then she had a declivity to descend for all the world exactly like that she had just climbed. This was a comparatively easy undertaking—though, in her haste, she several times stumbled and once fell, rolling down the hill till her further progress was arrested by a big rock, against which she came with such force as almost to knock the breath out of her body. For a moment she was nearly stunned, but quickly picked herself up, laughing heartily at her mishap, but changing her mirth to grief when she found that she had torn her best gown, and taken the skin off of a prominent part of her nose. Satisfying herself that the book was safe, she proceeded on her way with more caution, and in a few minutes reached the bottom of the cañon.

The prefix of "little" was applied to this particular

cañon, not because it was remarkably small, but for the reason that it was not so large as any of the other cañons in the vicinity. The floor of it was not much above a hundred feet across from one side to the other at any point, and in one place was not a third of this width, but it extended back to the Sierra Madre, a distance of nearly twenty miles, and was there connected with a larger and deeper cañon, which led far into the recesses of the mighty mountain range.

In the other direction it debouched into the wide prairie upon which the butte stood, at a distance of about a mile from where Lal had descended its steep side.

At the very bottom of the cañon flowed a stream that formed the origin of Wildcat Creek, or rather the chief source, for there were several minor tributaries, that, when the snow was melting in the mountains, or the rain fell heavily, helped to swell the waters of that fluctuating stream, which, as we have seen, oscillated between the two extremes of an overwhelming torrent and an insignificant, thready brook.

It was at its minimum now. There had been no rain for several days, and the melting of the snow in the mountains had gone about as far as it could till the hot sun of the following summer should beat down upon it in the ravines, and on the peaks and crags where it had lain all winter, undisturbed by any other force. The water was clear and it was cold, for it ran through the very deepest part of the cañon, and hence was little subjected to the rays of the sun. Lal stopped when she reached it, and sitting down on a bowlder at its very edge, began to repair, as well as she was able, the rent she had made in her frock. A few pins concealed some of its worst features; and then, having washed the blood from her nose, and removed from her face the traces of her recent encounter with "Mother Earth," she resumed her journey.

She had, as we have said, only about a mile to go before arriving at the butte, and the path was, for the greater part of its course, comparatively easy. Two or three times, in order to avoid climbing over rocky projections, she crossed the stream, which was only a yard or so wide, and which she could generally get over, by stepping from rock to rock, without even wetting her feet. Once, however, where a high point of solid granite crossed the path, she was obliged to take off her shoes and stockings and wade the stream; but this caused only a short delay, and soon afterward she emerged from the deep ravine on to the open prairie. Right in front of her, scarcely a quarter of a mile distant, stood the butte.

She crossed the intervening space at a rapid gait and began the ascent of the hill by the same path that Tyscovus had taken when he made his first appearance at her father's house. The way was familiar to her, and she went up the steep knoll with the agility of a mountain-goat. She reached the plateau and stood on the very spot where she had found the book. Her first impulse was to place the volume exactly where she had first seen it, and to return precipitately to Bighorn Spring without making her presence manifest to the occupant of the cabin. She looked around her. All was still, and there was no one in sight. She bent her head to listen; for the hitching-post at which she stood was only a few feet from the passage-way, and the steps of any one moving about in either room could have been readily heard, but no sound reached her ears. Should she go back, or should she go honestly and fearlessly into the house and take the consequences of her crime? For a moment she hesitated. She could restore the book, and no one but her mother would ever be the wiser so far as her offense was concerned. "No," she said at last, taking the package containing the book from her pocket, "I'm not afeard, and I've got to go sure, and the sooner the better."

She mounted the two steps necessary to reach the floor of the passage-way, and walked noiselessly to the door of the room in which she supposed Tyscovus to be, and which, as we have seen, was the one previously occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Bosler. It was shut. She knocked gently at first, and then a little louder, and, meeting with no response, raised the latch and pushed open the door. A large table, covered with books and papers, stood in the middle of the room, and at it, with his back toward her, and his head bowed upon his folded arms, sat a man, apparently utterly unconscious of her presence, or of any noise she had made. For a moment she stood motionless, somewhat astonished at the sight before her. Then she advanced as quietly as she could till she stood so close to the man that she might have touched his shoulder. Still he did not move. She saw that he breathed, but beyond that there were no signs that he was even alive. "He is asleep," she said to herself; "I'll lay the book on the table, and then I'll go out and wait till he wakes up, which, I guess, won't be long."

She went round to one side of the table, and was about placing the book where he would be certain to see it the moment he awoke, when suddenly he started up in surprise, and she, equally astonished at his unexpected return to consciousness, retreated a step, letting the book fall on the floor.

"I seen you was asleep," she said, after she had regained possession of the volume. "I knocked on the door, and then I thought may be I'd better come in. But I was jist goin' away ag'in to wait till you woke up."

"I was not asleep; I was only thinking. But you are Miss Bosler, are you not?"

"Yes, I'm Lal Bosler, as used to live here."

"Won't you sit down?" said Tyscovus, placing a chair by her side, "and, I beg of you, pardon the fit of abstraction which prevented me hearing you knock."

"I ain't got no time to set down," answered Lal, "and I ain't got nothin' to pardon neither, as I knows of."

"Then won't you tell me the object of your visit? Can I do anything for you?"

"No, I don't see as you kin do much," answered Lal, advancing toward him with the book in her hand. "You see," she added, looking at him at the same time full in the face, "I stole this book, and now I've brought it back, and I'm ready to go to jail."

"You stole my book!" said Tyscovus, taking the package which she held out to him. "Oh, yes, I see! The life of one of my ancestors. I missed it several days ago. May I ask how you stole it, and why?" he continued, with a little severity in his tone.

"I found it on the ground, close by the hitchin'-post, and I jist picked it up and put it under my shawl and carried it away the night we left the butte; and that's all there is about it."

"No, that is not all," said Tyscovus, with less hardness in his voice.

"No," repeated Lal, "it's not all, and I'm ready to go."

"Go where?"

"To jail."

"What for?"

"For stealin' your book, o' course."

"For stealing my book! Well, sit down first, and let me talk with you a moment or two."

Lal took the chair which he had brought for her.

"Why did you bring back my book?" continued Tyscovus.

"Jist because o' somethin' I read thar."

"The account of Saint Hedwiges?"

"I guess that was it. It was about the gal as stole the ring."

"Yes, and that my ancestor saved from prison and death; for they killed for theft in those days."

He paced the floor for several minutes, during which time Lal sat rigidly on her chair, her eyes fixed on vacancy. and with a slight, very slight tremor of her upper lip, but no other sign of emotion visible on her face.

Finally, he stopped in front of her, and, resting his hand on her head, said, "And do you recollect what my ancestor said when it was proposed to send her to prison and cut off her head?"

"He said as how they hadn't no right to spile a body as God made," answered Lal, her face maintaining its impassivity, and her eyes their stony stare, "and no right to take away a soul as mought, some day or 'nother, be good; for good souls was scarce in them parts."

"My dear child," continued Tyscovus, "good souls are scarce the world over. Do you think they are so plentiful here that I should run the risk of losing yours by sending you to prison? No, I would rather cut off my right hand, as my ancestor's was cut off, than stop the growth of what I hope may one day be a nobler soul even than Saint Hedwiges's."

Lal made no answer. She could not speak. Her lips were tightly closed, but they were tremulous with emotion, and tears were flowing from her fixed, staring eyes.

"Lal," continued Tyscovus, taking both her cold hands in his and drawing her from the chair till she stood erect before him, "stand up and look me in the face, for you are worthy to stand before any man fearless and unabashed. You stole my book. It was a sinful, a criminal, act; but a sin followed by honest repentance leaves the soul purer than before the wrong was done. It is here, as we are told it is in heaven, 'there is more joy over one sinner that repenteth than over ninety-and-nine just persons that need no repentance.'"

"Oh, don't talk to me like that!" exclaimed Lal, breaking down at last and bursting into a torrent of sobs and tears—"don't talk to me like that! I can't bear it; for, you see—you see—oh, send me to jail! Let me be punished, and then I guess I'll feel better. Things can't be squar' till I've worked it out in jail. Then I guess I'll start fresh." She clasped her hands together and looked imploringly into his face, while her bosom rose and fell with the storm of emotions that swayed her. "Yes, she continued, "things will be squar' then betwixt you and me."

Tyscovus had watched her all through the ebullition of passion which he felt was moving him almost as much as it did her. Here was nature—pure, uncultivated nature! and, had he been sufficiently cold-blooded, he would have studied each feature, as, in response to the tempest of emotions, it wept, or trembled, or twitched convulsively, or varied in vocal inflection or pathos; just as, in obedience to a tornado, trees are uprooted, houses blown down, water tossed into overwhelming waves. He might have found in the phenomena ample material for a chapter of his book, just as Darwin had discovered in the muscular movements of animals the basis of the emotional disturbances of man. But he was not cold-blooded; on the contrary, he was by nature as impetuous, as impulsive a man as lived, and whatever control he had of himself was the result of the severest and most self-denying discipline. At that moment, as Lal stood trembling and sobbing, her attitude and demeanor expressing the most intense humiliation and remorse, he felt very much toward her as three days before he had felt toward Theodora Willis. Perhaps he experienced a still stronger feeling, for there was more to call it forth. Here was a furious whirlwind, an uncontrollable torrent, that carried everything before it; there, whatever emotion was felt was kept in subjection by the still stronger intellect. Yet even *that* had moved him to declare that he experienced a higher

degree of love for the woman who spoke than he had ever before felt for human being. He might have used the words "regard," "esteem," "respect," or any one of a dozen others. He might have said, "I like you for your courage and for your devotion to your father—for your love for science"; but no one of these expressions would have conveyed the real thought by which he had been inspired. His whole heart had gone out to her—he had loved her; but the love he felt was born of the intense friendliness which at the moment pervaded his whole being, and which was given to her as the representative of humanity.

Now he would, had he yielded to the impulse that moved him, have clasped Lal to his heart, as a fond brother might clasp a sister, and have soothed her troubled spirit with the kindest and sweetest words in his vocabulary. Nothing appealed so strongly to his sympathy as self-sacrifice, and Lal had brought herself down into the very depths of abjectness in order to satisfy her sense of right. This, to him, was true nobility; this was atonement in its fullest expression; and then when the chief actor was a woman, one whose whole life had been at variance with the ideas that now governed her, the measure of his tenderness was full to overflowing. He did not pity her, for pity implies inferiority of some kind in the recipient. He honored her, as one who had shown her true heart, and who was prepared to pay, without a murmur, even with joy, the penalty of her misdoing. It mattered not that her speech was rude and uncouth; it was of no consequence that her manners and habits were not those of a lady; it was immaterial that she was the daughter of a horse-thief and murderer. She was all these, but she was a member of the great brotherhood of humanity—a woman making atonement. That was enough for him. But he felt that his powers of self-control were taxed as they never had been before. He dared not touch her lest he should do more, that, prompted

though it might be by the purest motives, would nevertheless be in violation of the canons governing the relations of young men to young women. He could not even trust himself to speak till Lal's agitation had subsided, and she stood calmly before him, like a prisoner before her judge waiting for the sentence that is to deprive her of life or liberty.

"I called you 'Lal' just now, may I do so again?" said Tyscovus, now fully master of himself.

"Oh, as to that, everybody calls me Lal, and I guess you kin, too, if you want to."

"Very well! Thanks. Now, Lal, won't you sit down and let me talk with you a few minutes? It is early yet; and, besides, if it should get dark before we have finished our conversation I will walk home with you."

"Oh, as to that," said Lal, as she took the chair he drew toward her, "I know the way well enough to keep the path on the darkest night, and I ain't a bit afeard."

"Very well, we will see about that matter after a while. Have you read much of this book?" he continued, taking from the table the little volume Lal had brought back to him.

"I guess I've read about all there is of it, 'cept, prehaps, the last chapter."

"It is the life of a good man."

"Yes, he was a moughty good man, that's a fact."

"He was an ancestor of mine."

"I don't know about that; but I thought as how he mought be kin to you."

"Yes, I am descended directly from him."

"His name's not quite the same as your'n, is it?"

"It is the same name, but about a hundred years ago it was contracted from Tyscovicius to Tyscovius, and still later to Tyscovus. I suppose if I were to make this country my home I should still further abridge it to Tysco, and my descendants would call themselves Tys."

"Mought you be goin' away?" said Lal, raising her eyes for the first time since the beginning of the conversation.

"I suppose I shall go back to Poland some day or other, but certainly not now. But about my ancestor. You don't know what happened to him?"

"No; I seen he was a-gittin' into trouble 'bout his religion, but I hadn't come to the part as told what they done to him."

"I will tell you, and then you will see how a good man dies for his opinions rather than give up what he thinks is right.

"John Tyscovicius was the questor of the town of Biesk, and a count of the kingdom of Poland. The country was then divided on questions of religion, and Count John held to his views with great firmness. On one occasion he had to take an oath, and it was demanded that he should swear on the crucifix that was held out to him. He refused to swear by a graven image, and, throwing the crucifix on the ground, declared that his God was eternal, and that he would appeal to him for the truth of what he was about to declare. For this act he was arrested and thrown into prison; was tried for blasphemy, and was sentenced to have his tongue pierced with a red-hot iron for having spoken disrespectfully of the crucifix; to have his hands cut off for having thrown it down; and to have his feet cut off for having trodden upon it. Then he was to be beheaded; and, finally, his dead body, or rather what remained of it, was to be burned at the stake. This sentence, horrible as it may appear, was executed in all its frightful details more than two hundred and fifty years ago, and my house in Warsaw faces the spot where my great ancestor gave up his life."

"He was a trump," said Lal. "I guess I'd 'a' done the same things. What's the use o' livin' ef you can't think what you please?"

"I am quite sure," said Tyscovus, looking her full in the face, "that, rather than give up an opinion that you thought was right, you would allow yourself to be cut into little pieces no bigger than your hand."

"That depends on what it mought be. But ef I'd made up my mind, and people was a-forcin' me to alter it, you may jest bet your pile I'd stand out ef I was to die by inches."

"I hope you may never be put to the trial; and, should you be, that you may be sure you are not wrong before you determine to die by inches for your right of judgment."

"It mought come," said Lal, musingly, "a'most any day now."

"How?"

"Luke Kittle. I mought be tried to be got to marry him, but 'afore I'd do it I'd be slashed up to flinders!"

Evidently she had not heard of "The Gulcher's" last performance, and of the consequent death of one of her admirers, or of the wealth that had been bequeathed to her. As we know, she had spent the last few days with her father and mother at Bighorn Springs, and that they had had no communication with the rest of the world. Doubtless her father knew of it at The Cañon, whither he had gone that morning, but he had not been heard from since his departure. Tyscovus reflected whether he should tell her of her mixture of good and bad fortune; but, finally concluding that the first information had better come from the doctor, her guardian under Vaca's will, he continued the conversation:

"You don't like Mr. Kittle, then?"

"Like him? I hate him!"

There was a degree of concentrated, wrathful indignation in the tone and emphasis of the last three words that caused Tyscovus to elevate his eyebrows a trifle, while a quiet smile passed over his face.

"Well," he said, "let us hope you will never be called upon to do anything so repugnant to you as marrying Mr. Kittle, who, from what I can learn, is altogether a disreputable fellow. But to come back to matters of more immediate importance. You like that book?"

"Oh, yes, how could I help likin' it when, ef it hadn't 'a' bin for it, I wouldn't 'a' bin here?"

"I am glad you like it, for I want you to take it as a gift from me, and as something that will always cause you to recollect this day."

Lal for a moment looked astonished. Then she hid her face in her hands and remained silent. When she removed them her features were composed.

"You are too good to me," she said, after a moment's pause, during which Tyscovus had written her name in the book and the date of the presentation, "and I guess I won't forgit what you've said to me to-day. We're goin' away from these parts jist as soon as father comes back from The Cañon, and then I'll have a better chance. I'd like to know more'n I knows now, and to do that I've got to work hard, I guess. I'd like to say somethin' now," she added, after another pause. "I thought as how you was a hard man, and I didn't quite like you; but you've bin good to me, yes, very good, and I think I'll not forgit it. You mought 'a' took me to jail, and perhaps it mought 'a' bin better, for then I'd be sure to remember. But I'm thankful, and I'll try hard; oh, yes, I'll try very hard to—to—do jist what you'd like me to do. Oh, I'll not forgit! You've spoken to me like as I never heard afore, and—and—I think I'll go now."

"I'll trust you, Lal. Here's your book. I've marked several passages that I think will please you. I am sure, too, that you will be happy," he continued, as he thought of the fortune that had been left her, and of the advantages she would have as Doctor Willis's ward, "and that

you will become a good and a wise woman like Saint Hedwiges."

"I'll keep this book jist as long as I live," said Lal, as she placed the little volume in the bosom of her frock. "It's the thing as fixed me. Good-by," she continued, her voice beginning to tremble a little. "It ain't much as I kin do, and it don't seem as ef it was right for me to ask God to do ary a thing for you, but," holding out her hands as she spoke, "I've heard tell of angels as watched over good people. I don't know as thar's any of 'em about here now, but, ef thar is," dropping on her knees and clasping her arms around Tyscovus, while her head was bowed almost to the floor, "I pray as they'll stick by you as long as you live, and keep all harm away from you, for you've been good to me. Good-by," she went on, as Tyscovus, raising her from the ground, held both her hands in his, while a smile of ineffable sweetness swept over her tearful face—"good-by!" and, before he could utter a word, she broke from him, and, rushing out of the house, was half-way down the hill ere he had reached the door. He called to her as he saw her retreating figure. She turned, waved her hand to him, and then quickening her pace was soon out on the open prairie. He stood gazing at her till she disappeared in the shadows of the Little Cañon. Then, with his head bent upon his chest and his hands clasped behind his back, he slowly re-entered the house.

CHAPTER XVI.

"DID HE WISH TO SEE HER AGAIN?"

On returning to the butte from his visit to Chetolah, Tyscovus found that not only had his wagon arrived, but that Mr. Higgins had been as good as his word, and had sent over all the things he had ordered, together with several others that the good man thought might be useful. The next morning Tyscovus had set to work, and in a short time had made himself a comfortable table, and a few articles of domestic furniture that he required. He even began the rather to him herculean task of making his roof water-proof, and by nightfall had so far succeeded that the room that he occupied was in a condition to resist any reasonable fall of rain or snow. The following day he continued his work on the roof, and, in addition, did something in the way of rechinking the house and regulating the lines of the chimney.

He determined to occupy but the one room, and to use the other as a receptacle for his boxes and store of provisions. Knowing that the winters were severe, he lined the walls of the apartment in which he expected to pass the most of his time with thick cotton cloth which Mr. Higgins, with considerable forethought, had sent over for the purpose. He then came to the conclusion that he had done nearly enough to make himself comfortable. In fact, it seemed to him that he had provided sufficiently for all probable contingencies, with the exception of the means

for heating his room and cooking his food. Mr. Bosler had left a small quantity of wood, but it was nothing to what would be required for the six or eight cold months before him. He, therefore, retained the teamster who had driven his wagon, and set him to work, he himself assisting, to pull down the stable, the logs of which were well seasoned, and to haul them up to the top of the butte. They were then ready for his labor whenever he wanted fuel and exercise. Besides this supply, he sent the man and team into the forest to collect such dry wood as could be found. Altogether, he laid in a sufficient supply, even should the cold weather be excessive or prolonged beyond its ordinary limit.

He had pulled down the stable, not only because he wanted the logs of which it was built, but for the reason that he had determined not to keep his horses. He had made up his mind not to leave the butte all winter. Horses, therefore, would be of no use to him; and, moreover, their presence would be a constant temptation for him to break through his resolution upon slight cause.

The teamster had been very efficient, honest, and faithful. When the time came to dismiss him, toward the end of the third day, he thanked him, paid him in full, and then made him a present of the wagon and horses. The man, whose name was Alexander Montgomery, was profuse in his thanks, and announced his intention to run the team and vehicle as a stage and express-wagon, from Hellbender to The Cañon, making tri-weekly trips between the two places, and carrying passengers and such light freight as might offer.

"And then you see, sir," said the man, "ef you wanted anything or 'nother I could stop as I went by and fetch it over to you, and then you wouldn't have no kind o' trouble to git what you pleased."

"No," answered Tyscovus, who was resolved to have no

more visitors at the butte than he could help, "that will not be necessary. Should I require anything, I will put up a red flag where the road touches the butte, and will fasten to the pole a memorandum of what I want. You can bring it and leave it at the foot of the butte, and I will fetch it up myself."

"All right, sir! what suits you suits me." And, again expressing his thanks, the man jumped into his wagon, and singing a merry song in reference to a "Jolly Bold Baker," he drove off, and, arriving at the prairie, took the road to Hellbender.

Again Tyscovus was alone. He had now firmly established himself in his new home, and might begin his work with a reasonable assurance of being allowed to go on with it undisturbed. It was not likely that visitors would trouble him, for even the doctor, who had announced his intention of seeking his society, had abandoned the idea on understanding that Tyscovus desired to be let alone.

"If, at any time," he had said, on taking leave after driving his guest home, "you shall want to see me, or I can do anything for you, send me word or come yourself. My house is always open for you."

Tyscovus thanked him.

"Do not think me churlish," he said, pressing the doctor's hand warmly, "if I do not now invite you to come and see me. I have a great work to do—a work that requires all my time and energies. You and your daughter are people after my own heart, and it is for that very reason that I must cut myself off from you at this time. I am the moth, you are the candle; if you were here I should be constantly seeking you, but if I do not see you, I shall not burn my wings."

"You are right," rejoined the doctor; "every intelligent person must respect your determination. Go on with your work, and when it is done, or you require me or my

assistance at any time, it will only be necessary for you to let me know."

After the departure of the teamster with his newly-acquired property, Tyscovus had seated himself at the large table he had made, and endeavored to arrange his thoughts for a serious attempt at beginning his book. His notes were on the table before him, as were also many books of reference that he might require. He continued for a few minutes the introduction he was engaged in writing when Abe Wilkins caused him so complete an interruption. His thoughts, however, flowed slowly, and could scarcely be said to be in the work before him, for continually recollections of his recent visit to Chetolah, and ideas that the memories evoked, flitted through his mind, notwithstanding all the effort he made to concentrate his attention in the direction of his book. Finally, perceiving that he was even so *distrait* that he was writing words that had no relation to the subject before him, he threw down his pen and abandoned himself to the full current of images and reflections that had taken complete possession of his mental organization.

"Theodora," he thought—"'the gift of God.' The very name is music to me. What is the object of life, if not happiness? And where can my happiness be more certainly found than in her presence? What is the possible fame to be derived from my work, in comparison with the delight of seeing her, of hearing her speak, of watching the play of her mobile features as they respond to each thought or emotion that flashes through her mind; of listening to the words of wisdom that fall from her lips, or to the admirable sentiments she expresses in regard to every subject that engages her thoughts? She is a woman to admire, to respect, and, in a certain sense, to love. She is a woman to choose as a friend, but whether she is one to whom I could give my heart, and with whose soul I could blend my own forever, I do not know.

"She has 'dissected every animal from man to an insect,'" he continued, after he had erased several wrong words he had written. "Faugh! Thank God! I only know her as a lovely woman whose manners are those of a princess; whose voice is both melody and harmony; whose taste in dress is perfect; whose tact and knowledge of the world are wonderful. The image satisfies me. Were I to see her in a dissecting-apron, a scalpel in one hand and the other groping in the opened chest of a corpse, fingering with delight the lungs and heart of a man upon whom the vigilance committee had executed their ideas of justice—great Heaven! I should turn away in disgust and never wish to lay eyes on her again. And yet she does exactly those things. Her beautiful hands have been imbued with the blood and the horrid juices of a dead body; her delicate fingers have torn asunder the once living tissues of a human form in search of the cancer, the ulcer, the gangrene, or other grewsome disease that may have caused death; and I have touched them with mine—yes," as he recollected the emotion he had displayed when Theodora told him about her father and herself, "have pressed them to my lips!"

"And yet," he continued, after a short pause, during the early part of which his face wore an expression of which disgust was the most prominent characteristic—"and yet, after all, it is the motive, not the act, that elevates or degrades, according as it is noble or mean. Women have sucked the poisoned wounds of those they loved, and wives and mothers do not hesitate to perform, in cases of necessity, the most loathsome offices for husbands or children. Why, then, should a woman who, in order that she may be qualified to save life, dissects a human body, be considered as having contaminated herself? It is unreasonable and wrong, but the fact, nevertheless, exists. I suppose no fine-grained gentleman in any part of the world could hear for

the first time, without some shock to his sensibilities, that a woman whom he loved had dissected a human body. But it is difficult to tell how much of the disturbance he would feel would be due to a violation of a true sense of right, and how much to outraged prejudices. There is the trouble; and so, after all, each man must be a judge for himself.

"I am quite sure the woman-movement will fail, but not till it has obtained some success. If this were the first attempt at what is called emancipation I should be in doubt. But it has been repeatedly tried before, and has reached points far higher than it is likely to reach now; but, in the end, Nature has resumed her sway, and women have returned to that position in the family and state for which they are suited."

These were his thoughts when, as we have seen, he was interrupted by the appearance of Lal Bosler, and the intrusion had tended strongly to confirm him in the line of meditation and conviction which his mind was taking. Here was a woman the very opposite in appearance, in position, in character, to her who presided at Chetolah, and had "dissected all animals from man to insects." The one would view a human corpse with indifference, perhaps even in some relations with pleasure; the other would doubtless start with fear or horror at the sight of a dead man's body. It was the difference between education and nature; and certainly, as he felt then, he would have preferred the love of the emotional, passionate, natural woman to that of the intellectual, educated one, who measured her feelings by her reason, and who guided her emotions whither she would, as the helmsman steers a ship, the course of which has been given him by higher authority.

Yes! Lal Bosler had impressed every fiber of his being. Low-born as she was, uneducated, unrefined, with degrading associations, she was Nature's child, a very woman with her mind set in the direction of truth and right, ready to

be led on to almost any point of perfection if only the guides were prudent and wise. With what earnestness she had uttered her homely phrases; with what strength her convictions were held; with what sincerity she had expressed her willingness to go to jail; what total abnegation of self she had exhibited; and then how every word of the prayer that burst from her lips had come from the depths of her soul, as she knelt at his feet, her arms around him, her head bowed in adoration and humiliation! He had looked and listened in bewilderment, in admiration, in love, his mind and heart stirred as he had vainly intended they never should be stirred. He wondered, now that she was gone, why, when he had first seen her, he had not been more strongly impressed with a sense of her personal beauty. Doubtless it was because he thought, on reflection, Lal's beauty was one rather of expression than of feature; the kind that required to be developed by the emotions that governed her, than that form that exists in repose, and that often disappears when the placidity of the features is disturbed. It was the kind he loved; it was the kind most intellectual men admire, for it not only gratifies the eye, but it pleases the mind also.

Lal fulfilled almost every requirement of his standard of female beauty. Her smile, when she rose to her feet after the agony of supplication in his behalf, was the tenderest he had ever seen, her tears the most eloquent, her pathos the most moving. But she was gone, and he would probably never see her again. Did he wish to see her again? He tried to dismiss the question from his mind and to resume his work. But a graceful, tearful form stood between him and his book, and looked beseechingly into his face. In vain he endeavored to concentrate his thoughts on the system of social statics that it was his object to elaborate and give to the world. He might as well have sought to melt the snows on the Sierra Madre by

blowing his breath on them. Did he want to see her again? He pushed his manuscript away in disgust and took refuge in his pipe. He was more than ever "John Buridan's Ass." But the tobacco now made him take a more hopeful view of the situation by removing all disturbing influences from his mind. Yes! He would like to see her again, coarse, untamed, rude, ignorant, the daughter of the "worst man between the two oceans," a thief herself—ay, but a repentant one, and Christ had pardoned a repentant thief!—as she was, if he could by a word have brought her then and there before him, he would have spoken that word, regardless of the past, of his work, of all that might have resulted. He was "John Buridan's Ass" no longer. He had made his decision. The stately, intellectual, gracious beauty of Chetolah might do more for humanity; she might exhibit her devotion for the sick and miserable; she might extend the knowledge of mankind; she might establish the truth of the doctrine of evolution by making legs grow out of a snake's belly; she was a woman to be respected, admired, loved with the chaste affection that the pupils of Hypatia had for their teacher, or the soldiers of Jeanne d'Arc for their commander.

But Lal, the untutored daughter of the wilderness, cared nothing for the world at large, the hypothesis of development would not interest her; whether or not snakes could be made to have legs was of no consequence to her. She did what she thought was right for her own sake; her benevolence was limited to those she loved, and those that injured or offended her she hated. But she loved him! Had she not clasped her arms around his knees, and almost kissed his feet? Had she not called down blessings upon his head, while prostrate before him in a passion of loving thankfulness? Yes, he certainly wished to see her again. He *must* see her again.

CHAPTER XVII.

DIPLOMACY.

When Mr. Bosler started on his journey to The Cañon, he had, as we have seen, several distinct objects in view, all to be arranged preparatory to bidding a last farewell to that part of the country. Before taking leave of his wife and daughter, he had made up his mind with all the decision of which an habitual drunkard deprived for several days of his accustomed stimulus is capable, that he would move away to a more civilized locality. When, therefore, he told them that, on his return, he and they would at once depart, he intended no deception. He believed what he said. He spoke as sincerely as he had ever spoken in his life. But Mr. Bosler was of a reflective turn of mind, and being alone in his wagon, and the horses—owing to the character of the road that had quite recently been cut through the dense timber—being obliged to go at a slow pace, he began to think seriously of many circumstances in which he had a strong personal interest. Chief among them was the subject of cutting loose forever from The Cañon, and leading a different life from that in which he had hitherto taken so great a degree of pride.

"Ef it warn't for Lal, now," he said, letting the reins lie loose on the horses' backs, "blow me ef I'd stir a step! The old woman's used to it, and raythur likes it, I guess, and it don't do her no harm nohow. But, as to Lal, I'd like to give the gal some larnin' and bringin' up sich as she

can't git in these parts. But it's goin' to be darned hard on me. What would I do warin' store-clothes and b'iled shirts week-days as well as Sundays, and layin' around loose, with none o' the boys on hand to make things a little lively? It's askin' too much, darn me ef it ain't, and I've a goll-darned mind jist to cut the whole darned thing and stay whar I am. The Bighorn's a good-enough place for any one, man, woman, or child.—Git up thar, darn your ugly hides! What the blazes do you mean, gittin' out o' the road in that way?" He gave the reins a jerk as he spoke, and laid the whip forcibly over the horses' flanks. There was a little plunging and kicking by the animals, and a good deal of highly scientific swearing from Mr. Bosler, before peace between the contending parties was fully restored. Then he lolled back on his seat and resumed his monologue:

"It ain't in natur' to expect the head of the family, who's got all dependin' upon him, to pull up stakes and git away from a place he mought call his home, jist because two women, who ain't got no responsibility in the matter, takes a notion to go. I'm as willin' as a steer mostly, but thar's some things as ain't right, and this ere's one on 'em." He stopped talking for several minutes, and in the mean time the wagon emerged from the wood and was on the main road connecting The Cañon with Hellbender. Here a greater speed was practicable, and Mr. Bosler was not slow to avail himself of the advantages of the prairie road on which he was now traveling. Suddenly, as though his determination could no longer be kept back, he yelled out at the top of his voice: "I'll be darned ef I go, and that's jist the end of it! I'll git some books," he continued, in a lower key and with less excitement, "and Lal kin larn herself jist as well as she could in Denver. She's smart enough for that, I guess." Having arrived at this conclusion in so easy and altogether satisfactory a manner, Mr. Bosler became more composed, and taking out his pipe from an in-

side pocket filled it with some cuttings from a piece of chewing-tobacco, and, lighting a match on the seat of his trousers, applied the flame to the heaped-up mass of the weed and began to smoke.

It was still early, and Mr. Bosler hoped to arrive at The Cañon before many people were stirring, and then, taking refuge at Crump's friendly saloon, ascertain from the proprietor—a former "pard" of his—how the feeling was in regard to himself before he ventured to appear in public. If the prejudice against him still existed; if there were yet lawless individuals thirsting for his blood—then, indeed, things were hard with him. If he could not with safety show himself at The Cañon in a community that had heretofore countenanced him, there was little security to be expected anywhere in the neighborhood. He was not without strong hope that time had softened the vindictive emotions of Hallam's friends. "They wouldn't," he thought, "be sich all-fired mean skunks as to keep up a grudge ag'in a fellow for a thing like that." Still, his confidence in human nature was not so great as the boldness of his words might have seemed to imply, and certainly not so strong as to admit of his incurring any avoidable risks. He, therefore, on arriving at the outskirts of the town made a slight *détour* so as to come in through a back street. He thus reached the stable-yard attached to "Crump's" without meeting any one but a few women and children to whom he was unknown, and who, moreover, were prevented getting a good view of the occupant of the wagon, owing to the fact that he had moved the seat farther back from the front, so that only his legs were visible to passers-by. He gave his team into the charge of the Mexican who officiated as hostler, with many emphatic injunctions as to the feeding of the animals, and then boldly stalked into the house.

The front shutters had not yet been taken down, and a

general air of dirt and discomfort pervaded the flashily furnished "saloon." A kerosene-lamp burned dimly on a table, and a man attired in shirt, trousers, and boots, was sleeping on the bar-counter, in a disturbed sort of a way, if a judgment could be formed from the fact that he groaned, and snored, and tossed his unpleasant-looking arms and legs from side to side, as though every minute his contortions would land him on the floor.

Mr. Bosler did not stop to awaken the sleeping guardian; he looked at him for a moment or two, and then, opening a door at the end of the bar, went behind the counter, and taking down a little bottle, the exact situation of which he seemed to know, helped himself to a long draught from its mouth. With a gentle smack of his lips, and an inspiration composed of a demand for fresh air, and a feeling of palatal gratification, in about equal proportions, he replaced the bottle, retreated from the inclosure, and then going out of the door by which he had just entered the room, shut it, and, giving three or four loud knocks, waited in expectation of the result. There being no response, he pounded again, and louder than before.

"Hello!" from within.

There was a scuffling of feet, and then, again, "Why don't you come in, ef you want to?"

Thus invited, Mr. Bosler opened the door, and advanced into the room.

"Why, Jim, ole boy, how air you?" exclaimed the now aroused custodian; "glad to see you. Whar in the blazes have you bin all this time?"

"How air you, Crump?" exclaimed Mr. Bosler, holding out his hand, which the other grasped and shook vehemently—"how air you? How's things goin'?"

"Well, as to that," replied Crump with some deliberation, "I ain't quite sure. I guess, though, things is pretty well settled down, except as to Sam Hodges and Joe Botts.

One on 'em, you know, is Hallam's wife's brother, and t'other's his uncle. They is a good deal riled yit, but they went over to Hellbender a couple o' days ago with 'The Gulcher,' and they ain't got back yit, so I guess you needn't be afeard o' them jist at present."

"As ef I wasn't more'n a match for both on 'em!" exclaimed Mr. Bosler with indignation; "and is Luke got back yit?"

"No, he is over in Hellbender, off and on. But ain't you heard the news?"

"Nary a darned news. How the devil could I, when I've bin out o' the way so long? What's up?"

"Well, 'The Gulcher's' done for Manuel Vaca, one thing."

"The devil he has!" exclaimed Mr. Bosler, jumping down in his excitement from the counter on which he had seated himself.

"Yes! Made a hole in his chist that you could stick your fist in, so they say. He's to be buried to-day."

"Well, I ain't much sorry as I knows on, but I wouldn't 'a' cried ef 'The Gulcher' 'd got his papers too. Tell us all about it." Mr. Bosler listened attentively to the particulars of the affair between 'The Gulcher' and Don Manuel Vaca, and which had resulted so disastrously to the latter, uttering as he took in the details of the story many exclamations of astonishment or pleasure, to accord for the time being with the state of his emotions. When Crump had concluded, his auditor appeared for a few moments to be lost in reflection over the possibilities of the situation. Then he laid a two-bit piece on the counter, and jerked his head significantly toward the bottle, with which he had already made a surreptitious acquaintance. Crump placed it before him, and Mr. Bosler, taking a tumbler from a stand near by where a half-dozen others had been put to drain, filled it nearly to the brim, and swallowed the un-

diluted liquor in about four consecutive and uninterrupted gulps.

"I guess I'll go over to Hellbender and see Luke. I've a leetle business with him as mought as well be settled now."

"You'd better not, Jim. It ain't safe for you over thar, and 'The Gulcher' ain't no friend o' your'n neither."

"I ain't afeard o' the whole d——d keboodle!" exclaimed Mr. Bosler, who began to feel the inspiratory effect of his potations. "And as to Luke Kittle, ef he's got ary a thing ag'in me, we mought as well settle it now onst and for all."

"I don't know as he's got much," answered Crump, "but, you see, thar's that matter o' Lal. He thinks you ain't treated him squar', and that you went back on your promise—which you done, Jim, I guess," added Crump, with a slight addition of reproach to his vocal expression.

"What the h—'s that to you!" exclaimed Mr. Bosler, raising his excitement to the requirements of the occasion, and slapping his open hand down on the counter to give additional emphasis to his remark.

"Well, now, don't be so all-fired cantankerous, Jim, 'specially with a friend like me," said Crump, conciliatingly. "In course, it ain't none o' my business, and I only said it in a friendly way like."

Mr. Bosler, not being yet up to the homicidal point, accepted the apology, and invited Crump to drink with him in token of the amicable state of his feelings.

"You see, Jim," said Crump, as they stood leaning on the counter, taking their liquor by sips this time, "you're too proud-spirited and thin-skinned. 'The Gulcher' ain't sich a bad fellow when you knows him well. In course," he added, hesitatingly, as if dreading another ebullition of temper from his companion, "it ain't none o'my business, and my remark ain't in the least personal; but ef I

had a daughter, and 'The Gulcher' wanted her, blow me ef I'd stop to think much about it!"

"Not if she didn't like him, would you?" said Mr. Bosler, inquiringly; "and he wouldn't come to terms?"

"That wouldn't make no difference. Ef she didn't like him at first, she'd git to like him. They always does. Why, Lord bless you! when I married Jane Slocum, I guess she hated me like pizen, but she's as lovin' as a sick kitten now."

As Mrs. Crump was generally more than half the time in bed, as the result of her husband's brutality, the comparison to a sick kitten was not altogether inappropriate.

Bosler was evidently touched, and Crump, seeing the impression he had made, continued:

"Think how it is with yourself, Jim. Now, I guess when you was first married, your wife didn't take to you much, did she?"

"Not so very much," answered Mr. Bosler, reflectively and apologetically.

"And every year she got lovin'er and lovin'er, didn't she?"

"I guess she did, Bill," answered Mr. Bosler, calling Mr. Crump, under the influence of the pleasant recollections evoked, for the first time by his Christian name.

"Till now you're jist as used to each other as a old pair o' boots, ain't you?" continued Crump, a little lacking in the logic of his comparison, but following up his advantage like the profound strategist that he was.

"Jist as used, Bill—jist as used," replied Mr. Bosler, with a sympathetic nod of his head.

"Well, now," continued Crump, pursuing his argument to its legitimate conclusion, "don't you see that that's jist the way it would be with Lal and Luke? Afore the year'd be out they'd be as sweet on each other as a duck on a June bug."

"Like as not, Bill, but it never took me that way afore."

"Now, see here, Jim," approaching Bosler, and talking in a lower but even more earnest tone than he had yet adopted, "you and I is old pards, and is bound to stick together, I guess. Leastwise, I'm bound to stick to you through thick and thin. I don't like to see you a-holdin' out ag'in Luke, and bein' talked about for goin' back on your word. No, dang me ef I do!" he continued, bringing his fist down on the counter with a force that sent the tumblers dancing over its polished surface; "no, I don't!" he repeated, as though his mind on the question was made up quite beyond the possibility of change; "and so when 'The Gulcher,' in the most gentlemanly way, was talkin' with me about it t'other day and hopin' as things would come right, says I, 'Gulch, it ain't nothin' as I wouldn't do to bring things straight 'twixt you and Jim Bosler'; and then, says he, 'Bill, thar ain't no man as I has sich a friendly feelin' for as Jim Bosler, and ef he only hadn't gone back on his word, thar ain't nothin' as I wouldn't do for him.'"

"Yes; that's darned pretty talk, it is!" said Bosler, the remembrance of certain threats of Mr. Kittle's occurring to him; "what did he mean by sayin' that ef he wasn't hitched on to Lal afore New Year's, some one would be wantin' a coffin?"

"Well, you see, Jim, I heard about that, and so I jist up and asked him, and, blow me, ef he didn't say it was a all-fired lie. He did, Jim, as sure as shootin'. But here's the p'int," he continued, with increased earnestness: "Luke is jist crazy after Lal, and he told me to tell you that ef you was willin' and would fix things easy for him he'd give you ten thousand dollars, and, you know, you only held out for five thousand. Ten thousand dollars! cash down in your hand, the very minute the parson said the word. He

wants to be generous and git your good-will, so he jist doubled your figger."

After making this declaration of Mr. Kittle's intentions, Crump remained a moment in an attitude of expectancy for the answer; but, as it did not come as soon as he had anticipated, he assumed a manner of indifference, and, going over to the door opening on to the street, unlocked it. Then he opened the windows, took down the shutters, and let in a little light and fresh air. Meanwhile, Bosler remained standing by the bar, apparently overcome by the character and magnificence of the proposition that had been made to him, and as though doubting that he had heard correctly. Finally, he seemed to have made up his mind:

"Bill," he said, somewhat hoarsely, "leave them darned cheers and things alone and come here, will you?"

"Well, Jim," said Mr. Crump, giving a table a finishing brush with his shirt-sleeve, "it ain't no business o' mine. She ain't my daughter, you know; but ef she war, I'd be all-fired glad to git 'The Gulcher' for her husband; 'specially ef I was paid ten thousand dollars in good hard gold, all for myself."

"I ain't got no feelin' ag'in Luke, and I always meant to stick by my word. I did feel kinder put out at what I heard he was sayin'; but ef he didn't say it, I ain't goin' to keep no grudge. So here's my hand, Bill, and ef he'll make it five thousand now, and the rest when the job's done, she's his'n right away."

"Now, that's what I call squar' talk!" exclaimed Mr. Crump, shaking Bosler's hand while he spoke. "I always knowed you was right at the core, Jim. I guess thar won't be no trouble about the spondulix; Luke's pretty flush now. He'll be back from Hellbender this mornin', and I'll squar' it all up. You'd better lay low here till it's all settled, and then you kin see Luke and finish things agreeable all round."

"Has 'The Gulcher' bin over in Hellbender ever since the muss with Vaca?"

"No, he's bin goin' and comin'. They took him up and bailed him, but as the croner's jury brought in a verdick of self-defense, I guess when he comes over to-day he'll come to stay."

"Well, I guess I'll stay inside till things is squar'. Not as I cares a darn for Hodges and Botts, nor any ó' that lot, but I don't want no muss as mought stop things. She'll have him, Bill. I'll be boss in my own family, by jingo! Ef I don't, you may call me a liar, and when Jim Bosler says that he means it."

"That's the way a man like you orter talk," said Crump. And then, overcome by the nobility of the sentiments expressed by Mr. Bosler, he seized that worthy gentleman around the waist and gave him a hug that a grizzly bear might have envied. "Come with me," he continued, leading the way into an inner room. "Mack—that's my bartender you know—'ll be here in a minute, and then I'll come back and we'll have a quiet little game till 'The Gulcher' comes. And he'll be along afore noon, and it's nine now. Here's a deck," he continued, taking a dirty pack of cards from his pocket, "and you kin play sol'tare till I come."

The room into which Crump conducted his friend adjoined the "saloon," but had no communication with the exterior except by a window looking out into the stable-yard. This was already shut; but, to obtain still greater privacy for the occupant, the proprietor closed the blind, and then, lighting a lamp, left Mr. Bosler to his own thoughts, and such amusement as he could extract from the game of solitaire.

CHAPTER XVIII.

NEGOTIATIONS.

On leaving Bosler, Crump went back to the "saloon," and waited a short time till "Mack" the bar-tender made his appearance. Then, instead of returning to his friend, to divert him with the promised "quiet little game," he ascended to the second story, and stopped before a door near the head of the stairs. Here he remained quietly for a moment, and, bending his head, listened for any sound that might reach him from the interior. Apparently satisfied that the apartment was still tenanted, he knocked loudly. A muffled groan, or rather grunt, was the first response, and then he heard the rustling of bedclothes and a step on the floor. The key was turned in the lock, the door thrown wide open, and Mr. Crump was confronted by a man with a horribly distorted face, who, to judge by his appearance, had been awakened from a heavy sleep, or rather, who had been disturbed, without yet having been fully awakened.

The man's countenance was so terribly disfigured by scars and contractions, that it would have been impossible for the most skillful physiognomist to determine whether he was pleased or offended at the intrusion. He glared at his landlord for a moment, with an expression that might readily have been interpreted to be the result of a desire to make mince-meat of Mr. Crump, but that was probably intended as a demonstration of good-will, for he invited him into the room, and closed the door.

"Well, Bill, what is it?" he said, proceeding very leisurely to habilitate himself in the rest of his clothes.

"The best luck in the world," answered Crump; "Jim Bosler's down-stairs, and—"

"Oh, he is!" interrupted Mr. Kittle, for it was that gentleman to whom the perfidious Crump was talking; "then I guess I'll have to go for him at once, and settle our little affair before he gets out of the way."

"No, you won't, for I've settled it. I had a good chance when we was by ourselves, and so I told him what you said, and he's entirely agreeable. Never saw a fish bite like him. Took the bait, hook and all!"

"You don't mean to say he's agreed, do you?" exclaimed Mr. Kittle, with a look that was, doubtless, intended for one of great delight, but which, instead of obeying the emotional impulse, deviated into a track peculiarly its own.

"Yes, I do—that's jist what I do mean."

"Then he can't have heard anything."

"Not a darned thing. He only knows as Vaca's done for, and that he heard from me."

"Nothing about the money?"

"Not a word. Ef he had, do you think he'd 'a' come round so quick? Not much! Jim ain't no fool, I tell you."

"No, he ain't a fool, but he's the biggest scoundrel I know, and he might have agreed, so as to get the money."

"I'm jist sure he don't know nothin' about it. All he asks is for you to pay him five thousand down, and the rest when you've got the gal. That seems fair, don't it?"

"I suppose it's fair enough, if he don't mean to play a cursed trick on me. But we'll have to hurry up like blazes, for, of course, he'll find out before many days, and then the jig's up. I'll give him the cash to-day, if he

wants it, and the thing will have to come off this week. If he fools me this time, I'll kill him like a dog!"

"I guess he's goin' to be squar' this time."

"I don't trust him any farther than I can see him. I'll give him the money, but I'll have him watched night and day till the girl's mine. And as soon as he shows the least sign of shuffling, he'll get his papers for kingdom-come!"

"It's lucky for you you found out about the money the gal's to git."

"Yes, and I wouldn't neither if it hadn't been that the lawyer I got to help me out of the scrape was the same one that drew up Vaca's will. He told me, and I'm to give him five thousand dollars when the thing's settled; that, with the thousand you're to get, and the ten thousand to Bosler, will be a pretty good slice out of the girl's hundred thousand."

"You kin stand it, Luke. You'll have eighty-four thousand left, besides a good pile of your own. You ought to run for delegate to Congress at the next 'lection. You'd go in sure."

"Well, perhaps I will, but I'd like just to go to the Territorial Council this session; and there I guess you can help me, Bill."

"Help you! Well, I kin, Gulch, and I'll do it, too. I guess I kin bring in about a hundred votes, and thar ain't no cuss as would dar' to run ag'in you."

"I don't know about that. I heard at Hellbender that they were trying to get up an opposition. They'd do anything up there to beat me, but I guess I can knock 'em. Now about this girl. I'm going to make Bosler sign a receipt for the money, and give me his promise in writing that the girl shall marry me. Then, all I ask is a fair show with her, and no underhand work from Bosler, and I'll fix the thing by Saturday week at farthest. It's got to be done

by that time, for the court meets on the Monday following, and the will will come up to be proved. After that, of course, there'll be no secret about it. But I was told, by good authority, too," continued 'The Gulcher,' winking one eye as well as the scarred eyelids permitted, "that Doc Willis, the trustee, didn't intend to say a word about it till the whole thing was fixed."

"Well, you've got ten full days to work in, and you ought to do it in that time."

"And I will, too! Now suppose you go down and keep Bosler quiet till I come."

"He thinks you're in Hellbender, Luke, and that you won't git back afore twelve o'clock; so you needn't hurry yourself."

"All right," said "The Gulcher," taking out his elegant gold hunting-case watch and looking at the time. "I've got nearly two hours yet, and I guess I'll go and see how the mine's getting on. I haven't been there for a week, except just to look in occasionally." So saying, and having completed his toilet, "The Gulcher" took his departure, leaving Crump to console Mr. Bosler with a "quiet little game," till the hour of noon arriving, he should, in accordance with existing arrangements, show himself as having just returned from Hellbender.

He was a sharp, shrewd man; ambitious and unscrupulous, and, like most ambitious and unscrupulous men, successful—successful, that is, from his point of view. He had received a tolerably good common-school education, and upon several occasions of popular excitement had made his mark as an impassioned orator. He had accumulated a considerable amount of wealth; partly by honest work, but mostly by gambling and sharp practices in business transactions. He had never actually stolen according to the legal definition of theft, and he had never, though several times using his knife or pistol in affrays, killed any one till he had,

as we have seen, felt himself compelled to put an end to Don Manuel Vaca's career. Although the legal technicalities, so far as they related to the actual killing of Vaca, were in his favor, there was no doubt as to his having provoked the quarrel, and consequently there was among the better class of citizens, both at Hellbender and The Cañon, a good deal of feeling against him, and indignation at the facility with which he had escaped all punishment. And, though there had been no open threats of violence, there was a general impression that the vigilance committee would take his case into consideration. Though not afraid, especially at The Cañon, where the majority of the inhabitants were friendly to him, Mr. Kittle thought it prudent to keep a keen lookout for any possible attack that might be made upon him. The dead Mexican had several friends in the place, who, though probably not desirous of keeping up any personal feeling, yet might be induced to make a sudden attack if the murderer came unexpectedly in their way.

As he went down the long, straggling street, therefore, Mr. Kittle kept his eyes in use, looking far ahead, and turning them from side to side as he passed the corners or came opposite to a drinking-saloon. He reached the mine, however, without meeting with any interference, and, having transacted a little business with the superintendent, and made provision for a day's longer absence, he started on his way back to Crump's. As he walked cautiously through the muddy streets, he busied so much of his mind as he could divert from the consideration of his personal safety, with the affair he was about to transact with Mr. Bosler. Matters seemed to be getting on in a much better way than he could have anticipated, and to the satisfaction of both the high contracting parties. As to the possible light in which Lal might view the arrangements that were being made for her future life, he did not deem it necessary to

concern himself. If he could insure the support or even the neutrality of her father, he had no fears in regard to the ultimate result. Lal might object and be defiant, and even vindictively violent for a while, but he had faith in his powers of persuasion, and still greater confidence in certain compulsory measures he might be called on to adopt. However, he was of the opinion, from a long acquaintance with the mysteries of the female mind, that women did not long maintain a spirit of resistance when met by such indomitable firmness as he knew he possessed; and that the duration of their opposition was in inverse ratio to the positiveness with which they asserted their intention of never yielding.

As regarded Mr. Bosler, he determined to tie him up by such written pledges that, if he violated them, he would have ample ground for encompassing his destruction. He recognized the fact, however, that the strongest hold he would have on that gentleman would be the five thousand dollars he was to pay him on the conclusion of the marriage ceremony. And that reminded him that the first installment of the ten thousand was to be paid that day; so he stopped at his own "saloon," and opening the burglar-proof safe that stood in a corner of the apartment—deserted as it was in the daytime by all but the attendants—he took out five bags, each holding a thousand dollars in gold. These he put into a small leather traveling-bag, and resumed his way to Crump's, not without some grumbling at the twenty-five pounds or so of dead-weight that he was obliged to carry.

Arriving at his friend's establishment, he repaired at once to his own room, sending word to Crump that he had arrived. This individual and Mr. Bosler were carrying on the "quiet little game" that had been promised, with the result of the loss to the latter of the entire proceeds of the sale of the butte to Tyscovus, with the addition of all the

other spare cash that Mr. Bosler had in his possession. Although, consequently, in no pleasant frame of mind, he was, nevertheless, so situated that a replenishing of his exhausted finances was an event much to be desired, and the advent of "The Gulcher" excited a corresponding amount of joy in his paternal breast. When, therefore, Crump returned with an intimation that Mr. Kittle was in his room, and would be delighted to see his prospective father-in-law, he sprang up with a degree of agility that few other excitations would have developed.

The meeting between the two gentlemen was affective. They had not seen each other for several months, and, when they had last come together, high words and even threats had passed between them. Nothing now, however, could have exceeded the kindly manner in which 'The Gulcher' held out his hand, and distorted his face into what he intended as a smile. Mr. Bosler met these affectionate manifestations half-way, his one eye twinkled, and too much overcome—either by the intensity of his emotions, or the strength of the whisky he had been drinking all the morning, or, more probably, by a combination of both factors—to speak, he could only grasp Mr. Kittle's outstretched hand, and mumble over it some inarticulate expressions of good-will.

"I always knowed as you was prime, Luke," he said, when he had sufficiently recovered his composure to be enabled to speak intelligibly; "and though thar's bin misunderstandin's atween us, we have bin sot on ag'in each other by some darned skunks as didn't want to see us friends. Thar's Vaca now, he was about the worst on 'em, and it's a good riddance you've made o' him. But I never believed the half they said about you, Luke. Ef I did, you may call me a liar."

"It's all right now, Jim, anyway," answered Mr. Kittle; "we've had our little ups and downs like the rest

of 'em, but it's all right now, I guess, and we'll be good friends hereafter."

"That we will, Luke! I was sayin' to Lal a few days ago that I guessed she'd better make up her mind to take you. You see, you're a risin' man, and you'll rise, and rise, till you git higher nor a kite. I says to Lal, 'Here's the man, now, as kin make a lady out o' you, and there ain't another man in the Territory kin do it better."

"And what did she say to all that?"

"Well, she didn't say much," said Mr. Bosler, to whom the question came too unexpectedly for him to frame a suitable lie in answer; "she don't talk much, but I knows her well," he added, having in the mean time recovered his usual mendacity; "and I kin see as she's got a sneakin' fancy for you, Luke, jist as the rest on us has. These gals is mighty onsartin and deceivin'. You think you've got 'em, and you finds you ain't; and you thinks you ain't got 'em, and you finds you has."

"Bill tells me that he informed you of what I was ready to do. I like Lal very much, and I would be glad to make her Mrs. Kittle as soon as possible, and I want to be friends with you, too. It'll all be in the family."

"He did, Luke. Half down, and the rest when the thing's done; that's what he said, and that's agreeable to me.'

"No, that was not exactly my proposition. I said I would pay you ten thousand dollars when the job was done. Still, I don't care to stand off on a trifling matter like that," added Mr. Kittle, magnanimously—"especially with the man who's going to be my father-in-law; and if it suits you better, I'll pay you five thousand in advance."

"It would, Luke—it would! You see I'm all-fired short jist now, and thar'll be lots o' things to git for Lal so as to make her fit to be your wife. You see I'm a darned proud kind of a man, and I wouldn't like to see no gal o'

mine goin' to a man like you without being well pervided. I s'pose it ain't the right sort of a feelin', but I've got it sure. Oh, yes; pride, I guess, is my worst fault, Luke."

"That's all right. Now you wait a minute till I write out a paper for you to sign, and then I'll hand you over the money."

"Paper! Oh, I wouldn't like to sign no paper. Atween gentlemen like us, what's the use of dockyments? My word's jist as good as my bond, I guess."

"Well, there are several reasons. First, your memory ain't any of the best; second, I wouldn't give five thousand dollars to any man, without papers passing; third, you might die; and, fourth, I'll see you wriggling on the devil's pitchfork before I'll go on with the matter, unless you sign a paper I'm going to draw up! If you don't, the thing's off, and I'll get the girl in my own way, whether you like it or not!"

At any other time, and under any other circumstances, bold words like these would have insured an energetic response of some kind from Mr. Bosler. But the bait that had been held out to him was so large, that it had not only entirely destroyed all his powers of resistance to Mr. Kittle's intentions toward his daughter, but had converted him from opposition to thorough acquiescence. He was determined to have the ten thousand dollars, and therefore he made no further objection to "The Gulcher's" plan of proceeding. This candidate for the honor of being Mr. Bosler's son-in-law at once, therefore, took the matter into his own hands, and was soon engaged in the composition of an instrument that he intended should set forth all the facts and be sufficiently binding on Mr. Bosler's conscience. Not being very expert at literary work, the writing of this paper took him over half an hour. It was not long, but it was sufficiently comprehensive and emphatic to fulfill all the requirements of the occasion as they understood them,

though doubtless a legal luminary less astute than a Philadelphia lawyer could have picked many flaws in it. It was as follows:

"BILL DODD'S CAÑON, COLORADO,
"*September* 13, 1873.

"I, James Bosler, of Costilla County, in the Territory of Colorado, being of sound mind and memory, do hereby, in consideration of the sum of ten thousand dollars, five thousand of which I have received, agree as follows:

"1. My daughter, Lalla Bosler, shall be married to Luke Kittle, of the county and Territory aforesaid, on or before three o'clock, on Saturday, the 23d day of September, 1873, at Bighorn Spring, in said county and Territory.

"2. I agree, in good faith, to do all in my power to make said marriage agreeable to my said daughter.

"3. In case of any failure in either of the provisions set forth in No. 1 and No. 2 of this paper, I hereby agree to return the said sum of five thousand dollars to the said Luke Kittle, at the time and place aforesaid.

"4. In case all the provisions are fulfilled, I agree further to receive the additional sum of five thousand dollars in full for all claims against the said Luke Kittle, his heirs or assigns."

Mr. Kittle read this document in a loud tone, and then Jim Bosler, after receiving a paper from "The Gulcher," in which that gentleman expressed his obligation to pay the further sum of five thousand dollars when the marriage was performed, affixed his signature. Mr. Crump signed as witness to both instruments. The money was counted out to Mr. Bosler, the traveling-bag given him to carry it in, and the transaction was complete. Then "The Gulcher" generously ordered whisky and tobacco, and the trio sat engaged in conviviality only, till the supplies were exhausted. It was then nearly three o'clock. Mr. Bosler was still sufficiently sober to know that the sum in his possession was

too large to be kept about his person either with safety or convenience; so, taking his satchel in his hand, he went across the street to the bank and made a deposit of all but a small amount which he reserved for his immediate necessities. He then returned to Crump's, ate a little dinner, and, though somewhat solaced by a sense of the importance of the affair he had just completed, thought it best, as he intended to start early in the morning for Bighorn Spring, to go to bed, and to sleep, if not the "sleep of the righteous," as soundly as his particular degree of righteousness might warrant.

CHAPTER XIX.

A MOVEMENT IN POLITICS.

THERE was great rejoicing at Chetolah when the results of Theodora's experiments in evolution became known to the household. As soon as her father had returned from the butte, whither he had driven Tyscovus, she called him into her laboratory, in order that they might together verify the discovery that had been made. The snakes were now reposing quietly on the floor of the case in which they were confined. Although the black snake is not poisonous, large ones like those in question have a great deal of constricting power, and would, if seized, make it decidedly uncomfortable for the arm of the attacking individual. It is known that, in one instance, a snake of this species, not longer than Theodora's, when seized just behind the head by a professor of natural history who had captured it, wound its strong body around the unfortunate man's neck and strangled him to death.

But the doctor and his daughter were not only more wisely cautious than the rash professor, but they were more scientific. Opening a little door in the top of the case, the doctor took a large sponge, and, saturating it with a mixture of ether and chloroform, he dropped it into the apartment close to the animals' heads. They made a few sluggish and ineffectual efforts to avoid inhaling the stupefying vapor, but soon relapsed into a state of insensibility. Then the doctor took first one and then the other out of

the cage, and laying them on a long table, placed the anæsthetic sponge close to their heads, so that they might continue to inhale a soporific atmosphere. He then proceeded leisurely to examine into the question of legs or no legs, assisted by Theodora, whose interest in the matter was equal to his own, though perhaps not so prominently exhibited.

Turning the limp and insensible reptiles on their backs, the two investigators pursued their examination in the most minute and thorough way, though, in truth, the existence of a pair of ventral limbs, exactly situated as Tyscovus had discovered them, was so obvious as to be readily seen by the most superficial observer. There they were—leg, foot, and claws—the whole extremity being already nearly an inch long. The enthusiasm of the doctor was boundless. He embraced and kissed his daughter, and walked about the room in a fever of delight. "You have not only, my dear," he said, "demonstrated the truth of the evolution hypothesis, but you have created a new genus of reptiles, perhaps even a new order. If this had been done in France, you would have been decorated and elected a member of the Academy, and even, most likely, have had a statue erected to your honor in some public place in the city of Paris. Here, however, no one outside of this house will care a *sou marqué* whether these snakes have legs or not."

Theodora laughed. "Not even Mr. Tyscovus, papa?" she inquired, demurely.

"Well, I didn't think of him," said the doctor. "I suppose he would take an interest in such matters."

"I am sure," continued Theodora, earnestly, "that he takes an interest in everything that directly or indirectly concerns the human race. He is very intelligent, very liberal in his views, very anxious to do something for humanity."

"You are enthusiastic over him, Dorie," said the doctor, laughing, and preparing to replace the snakes in their case. "Perhaps he may, ere long, have an opportunity of serving mankind in a way of which at present he has no suspicion."

Theodora looked inquiringly at her father, but said nothing.

"This morning," continued the doctor, "I met Higgins, and he is determined on nominating Mr. Tyscovus for the Territorial Council. There is a vacancy in this district, and Luke Kittle, one of the biggest blackguards I ever knew, has been urged by many persons as base as himself for the seat. He will poll a large vote, and probably be elected, unless some one can rouse the people into a furor against him and the lawless classes of the community. Higgins declares Tyscovus is the man, and perhaps he is. If the law permitted, I would urge you, Dorie, as the proper one for the position, but, unfortuately, it is out of the question."

Theodora smiled. "Oh, yes," she said, "that, of course, is impossible. But how about Mr. Tyscovus? Would he be allowed to serve, and would he consent to serve?"

"All he would have to do would be to declare his intention to become a citizen of the United States, and that he could do to-morrow. As to whether or not he would accept a nomination, I do not know. I promised to see him on the subject in a few days, but I am not certain that I can fulfill my engagement. He is so anxious to get to work, and so infatuated on the subject of solitude, that I dislike to disturb him. Besides, I fear he would not give his consent."

"I think if you could make it apparent to him that he could do much good by giving his influence and vote in favor of good laws and their enforcement, that he would be

willing to make any sacrifice required of him. He is very conscientious and very honest."

"Well," rejoined the doctor, laughing again, "you seem to know him, Dorie. I think I shall have to delegate my duties as ambassador to you. Will you see him?"

"Oh, no, papa! It would scarcely be proper for me to call on Mr. Tyscovus."

"A woman of your intellect, my dear, can do anything not positively immoral. Conventionalities are only for people of weak minds, who, not knowing how to regulate their own conduct for themselves, are dependent for guidance on the opinions of others. However," continued the doctor, yielding as usual to Theodora, "perhaps it might be better for me to beard the lion in his den. So, if the people really want him as their councilor, I'll go down to the butte some day this week and talk the matter over with him. I've got to go by there to The Cañon in a few days to make some inquiries into the condition of Vaca's affairs."

"That will be much better, papa," said Theodora. "I think," she added, "that I might venture to send him a message by you. But about Señor Vaca's estate. Will it be as much as you thought last night?"

"Yes, I think so—perhaps more. He has two ranches of several thousand acres each, and about thirty thousand sheep. Besides, he owns a good many shares in the 'Good Luck' silver-mine, one of the best in the Territory."

"I suppose you will not tell Miss Bosler of her good fortune till all is settled."

"No; but even if I wished to do so I could not, for I have no idea where she is. No one knows, probably, except Tyscovus, and he will not tell, for fear I should head the vigilance committee in their movement against her father."

"And should you, papa?"

"Certainly I should, and with the greatest pleasure. I am sure I should be doing the country a good service by aiding in the stringing up of Mr. Jim Bosler—the greatest scoundrel I have ever known."

"But, papa," said Theodora, laying her hand on his arm, "don't you think it would be inconsistent with your duty as the guardian of the daughter to assist in the killing of her father?"

"Guardian of the daughter!" he exclaimed, with some hesitation and confusion of manner. "Well, I never thought of that. Perhaps it would be a little out of the way for me to take an active part in the operation. You are right, Dorie, as usual—always right! but—"

"But, papa," persisted Theodora, "would it not be still more in accordance with your known character and your obligations to this poor girl, whom I have often heard you speak of as having many good qualities, to do what you could to prevent the lynching of her father, and to help him to leave the country, as I hear he intends to do?"

"To tell the truth, Dorie, it never struck me in that way before. But I dare say you are right. Yes," he added, after a moment's reflection, "I am sure you are right. I'll help to get him and Mrs. Bosler away, and then I shall have a clear conscience in my treatment of Lal. It would, I confess, be unpleasant to have her at some time or other reproach me with having aided and abetted in the hanging of her father. Good God! what a narrow escape I've had from remorse that would have clung to me all my life! And all through you, Dorie, my dear. If it wasn't for you, I don't believe your old father could keep himself in a state of sanity or respectability."

"You are everything that is good," said Theodora, putting her arms around his neck and kissing him; "and, see! the snakes are quite revived. I think we can leave them now and take our tea, which is doubtless ready for us."

So saying, she took her father's arm, and the two walked back into the inhabited part of the house.

Several days elapsed, during which there were repeated visits to Chetolah by Mr. Higgins and other local politicians who desired to exchange views with the doctor on the subject of the Council nomination. There appeared to be an entire unanimity relative to the desirability of selecting Tyscovus as the man to beat Luke Kittle. In the first place, he was especially eligible, for the reason that no one could, with truth, bring any charges against him of such a character as to unfit him to represent the freemen of the district of which Costilla County formed an important part; second, his personal associations had been so limited that he had formed no enmities, unless, indeed, Mr. Abe Wilkins should consider himself aggrieved, and should enter the caucus as the friend of "The Gulcher"; and, third, every one admitted that his educational qualifications were of a character not often met with in a Territorial legislator.

But a caucus of the opponents of Mr. Kittle was to be held, and, as it happened, the night selected was that of the day on which Lal had made her visit to Tyscovus for the purpose of taking back the book she had stolen. She had returned to Bighorn Spring; Mr. Bosler was in bed at Crump's; and Tyscovus was making strenuous endeavors to concentrate his attention on his book, but was only succeeding in arriving at the conclusions that Lal loved him, and that he *must* see her again.

The caucus was to be held in the lecture-room of the Lyceum, and at half-past six o'clock the two or three hundred individuals who had been notified to attend began to assemble. There were, also, a dozen or more representatives from the other counties composing the Council district. It was arranged that at seven o'clock the meeting should be called to order by Colonel Edward T. Brattle, a prominent coal-dealer of Hellbender, late a cavalry-officer

under Stonewall Jackson, and whom the reader will recollect as the leader of the vigilance committee, when they made their visit to the butte in search of Mr. Bosler. Colonel Brattle was to make a few remarks explanatory of the object of the assembling of so many of the first citizens of Hellbender, and was to nominate Doctor Willis as president of the meeting.

At the hour designated for the beginning of the proceedings, the hall was well filled, and, amid much stamping of feet and clapping of hands, Colonel Brattle arose and called the meeting to order.

"Fellow-citizens of the Fourth Council Deestrick," he cried, in a loud voice, "we've come here to-night to nominate a gentleman to represent us in the Territorial Legislature. We're law-abidin' citizens, and we mean to put a stop to the things ag'in law as is goin' on right under our very noses." (Applause, and cries of "That's so!" from all parts of the hall.) "Sich bein' the case," continued the orator, warming to his work under the encouragement of the assemblage, "I want to know what you're goin' to do about it? Air you a-goin' to 'low murderers and scoundrels to drag the fair name of the Fourth Council Deestrick in the mud?" ("No! no!" from hundreds of voices.) "Not ef you knows it, you ain't. You keers for liberty; you keers for law; you keers for decency as they war handed down to you by the immortal fathers of the republic, and which is now jist as necessary, perhaps more so, as they war then. And you're a-goin' to git 'em!" (applause, and cries of "We air! we air!"); and you're a-goin', probably, to send a man to the Council of this Territory as knows what freedom is; for he's suffered in the cause of his country; he knows what law is, for he's bin whar they ain't got none but what one man makes, and it's darned bad law at that; and he knows what decency is, for he ain't a horse-thief or a murderer; and he knows how

to defend himself when his rights is invaded. I seen him, too, under very tryin' circumstances, and all I kin say is, that he behaved like a man and a gentleman. Fellow-citizens! I won't name him." (Applause, and cries of "We know him!") "Others will do that; but I nominate Doctor Robert Willis, the man as has done more for Hellbender than any other man, a man as you all knows and respeks, as president of this 'ere meetin'. All in favor of that nomination will say 'Aye'." (A perfect storm of "ayes" followed.) "Contrary opinion, 'No!'"

There was silence for a moment, and then a solitary "No!" was heard from a corner of the hall. "Put him out! put him out!" came from all quarters. In vain the doctor arose and begged for toleration. His voice was drowned in the tumult of cries. A dozen men started toward the objector, who turned out to be an English gardener whom the doctor had discharged from his service for insolence. He was seized neck and heels, and, in spite of the appeals of the doctor, was hustled, not very gently, out of the room. "We ain't goin' to let no danged furriners interfere with the liberty of speech in this free country," said a burly miner, the overseer of a gang of men who worked in one of the doctor's mines, as he returned to his seat. "They'd ride rough-shod over you ef you'd let 'em."

Order being restored, the doctor took his seat as president, and then made a few remarks explanatory of the objects in view, and describing the lawless state of the country under the present administration of justice. "We must turn them all out as we get the chance," he said, amid the cheers of the audience, "and we have now an opportunity to begin the good work by sending to the Legislative Council my friend, and the friend of all good citizens, John Tyscovus. I won't say anything now in his praise—you have heard about him from the gentleman who has just

spoken. But if you nominate him, and he accepts, my word for it, you will hear from him in tones of no uncertain sound."

There were speeches by others, and then, amid loud cries of "Higgins! Higgins!" that gentleman arose. "Fellow-citizens!" he said, standing on a chair and waving both arms as though to clasp the whole meeting in a loving embrace, "I'm not goin' to give you a speech; I'm only goin' to say a few words as will strike into your souls, and rouse the sleeping lion that now reposes in fancied security. Rome lost her liberty by trustin' to tyrants, and we'll lose ours if we goes around waggin' our tails and lookin' pleased when the danger's all about us. Fellow-citizens! I know Captain Tyscovus." (He had finally succeeded, after many lessons from the doctor, in getting the name.) "I've seen him, a rich and powerful man, leavin' his own country to taste the blessin's of freedom in this enlightened land. He's had the irons of the tyrant on his limbs because of his love for his country. Fellow-citizens! the man as would suffer for the country whar he was born wouldn't be likely to squeal if danger come to his adopted country—this great and glorious Union!" (Immense applause.) "No! fellow-citizens! you see him a-takin' his part like the rest on us, jist as he stood by his own home when a ruffian tried to burgle him. Therefore, fellow-citizens, I nominate Captain John Tyscovus, of Costilla County, for councilor from the Fourth Council Deestrick."

The nomination was seconded; and then, after making a few remarks, in which he spoke of the qualifications of Tyscovus for the vacant seat in the Territorial Council, the doctor put the question, and, with a unanimous storm of "ayes!" the nomination was made. A committee, consisting of Messrs. Higgins, Brattle, and the chairman, was appointed to inform the nominee of the desire of his fellow-citizens that he should represent them in the Legislature;

and then, with "three cheers and a tiger" for "Tyscovus and reform!" the meeting adjourned.

It was arranged that on the following evening the committee should visit the butte, and formally announce to Tyscovus the action of the caucus; and then the doctor returned home to inform Theodora of what had been done. Over the big open fire of the drawing-room at Chetolah they discussed the probabilities of Tyscovus accepting the nomination; and then, after the doctor—in spite of the sanitary knowledge that told him it was wrong—had taken his usual cup of tea before retiring, the two repaired to their respective bedrooms; the doctor to sleep as soon as his dose of strong tea would permit, and Theodora to sit for an hour before the cheerful fire in her room, thinking of those things that most interested her. This to her was the most cherished hour of all the twenty-four; the one in which, safe from interruption, she could either consider the events of the day passed, or those likely to occur in future; or, with some loved volume in her hand, find food for reflection in the ideas suggested by the author. To-night, the incidents that the last two days had brought forth were sufficiently exciting to engage her attention. She was not prone to overestimate the value of her scientific acquirements, or to attach too great an importance to any contributions she could make to the knowledge of the world. She never conversed on such matters, unless with persons whose interest in them was equal to her own. She was never, therefore, in danger of being taken for one of those priggish women who, having a smattering of information on subjects not generally familiar to what is called "society," air their slight learning on all occasions. She knew that such women are much more offensive than men of similar characteristics.

Now, the important results that had been obtained in the matter of investigating the truth or falsity of the doc-

trine of evolution upon which she had entered, engaged a large share of her thoughts, as she sat in front of the bright wood-fire, her little feet, delicately incased in her bedroom slippers, resting on the polished brass fender, her reddish-auburn hair falling in warm waves over her neck and shoulders, and her attitude in the luxuriously cushioned chair suggestive of the most perfect bodily ease. Her training had been such as to encourage the cultivation of her thinking faculties, and she had, therefore, no difficulty in inducing the condition of mental concentration without which deep thought, except as suggested by perceptional excitations, is impossible. If, as has been asserted, women are incapable of abstract thought, she was an exception to the rule.

And yet, with intellectual powers of a high order, there was no lack of sentiment in Theodora Willis, and no deficiency in her power of emotional expression. There was nothing "hard" about her. She was impressionable, without being weak, and, even when she was firm in the tenacity with which she held opinions or pursued a course that others thought inadmissible, she persevered with a sweetness of manner that was of itself usually sufficient to disarm all opposition. She had no desire for notoriety, and yet it was very necessary that the scientific world should become acquainted with the important results she had been able to obtain. In that way only could further investigations in the same direction be initiated. Besides, she felt herself incapable of dealing with the great fact in such a manner as to make it useful in still further advancing the boundaries of science. Then, she was not unmindful of the fact that the mere circumstance of her being a woman would in the estimation of some scientific men—for narrowness of mind is not absolutely incompatible with the possession of great knowledge—be sufficient to cast a doubt on the authenticity of her discovery. An idea was prev-

alent, she thought, that her sex was, as a rule, inexact; that women did not appreciate the importance of being thorough and precise; and that without being governed by the motive of intending to deceive, they nevertheless did, by the looseness of their statements, often lead to the formation of erroneous inferences. She had taken the pains to look into the matter of these charges, and, while she found much ground for their correctness, she was quite certain that the fact was altogether due to the character of the education given to the majority of women from the time they are born till they reach the grave.

Though living a great part of every year in the wilds of Colorado, Theodora and her father spent every summer in the East, where they always had access to what is known as the "best society." She had not failed to recognize the fact that it was constituted of elements that gave neither permanency nor dignity to the organization. She had met people at balls and dinners one season, who were invisible the next, and, on inquiring the reason had been told that the head of the family had lost his wealth in business-ventures, and that the wife and daughters were no longer considered desirable acquaintances. New people had come in, many of whom, after holding their places for a season or two, would disappear, and be heard of no more. She had driven in the Central Park of New York, and after a month or two had got to know, by sight at least, many of the elegant equipages and their occupants, that filled the roads every afternoon. The next year there was a new set, still more magnificent than the former, and the latter had gone the way of all unfortunate speculators in stocks, pork, or breadstuffs; possibly to reappear, in after-years, but probably never more to haunt the places they loved so well. All this had disgusted her, and she had always turned with avidity to her studies, grieved at the reflection that, as matters were now constituted, there was little hope for the

elevation of her sex in the intellectual scale. The improvement, she saw, would not come till men frowned on the frivolities and ignorances of women, and sought their wives among those who had thought it a matter of importance to cultivate their intellects.

With the quick perception that was such a striking feature in her character, Theodora had at once recognized the superiority of Tyscovus to the majority of men of his station in life. She had seen his readiness to be enlightened, and the little hold that his opinions had upon him when facts no longer warranted their being held. She discovered at once that, though he had strong convictions on every subject upon which the conversation touched, he was ready to modify or renounce them so soon as it was shown that the logic of circumstances was against them. There was no trace in him of that intellectual obstinacy which men of weak minds are so prone to exhibit; no disposition to argue for the sake of arguing; no ungenerous concealment of the fact that his views had changed. On the contrary, to admit that he had been in error appeared to be a passion with him; magnanimity had cropped out in every discussion she had had with him; he appeared to be absolutely free from ineradicable prejudices, and to keep his mind open to receive new truths as fast as they were presented.

All this was very pleasant to her. Such men as he were rare; indeed, she had before encountered but one like him, and she would have been pleased could she have seen more of him and have interchanged ideas with him on those many subjects that interested them both. When, therefore, he announced that he intended to seclude himself on the butte for several months, she experienced a feeling of disappointment that scarcely, however, reached the point of regret, and that, therefore, did not touch her emotional nature to any but a very moderate degree. It is true he had given her his sympathy when she had told him of the

course of her education and of her father's mental disturbance; he had also expressed manfully, generously, his appreciation of the pregnant results that had been obtained from her experiments in evolution; he had renounced, to some extent at least, the views he had held relative to the part that women should play in the grand social economy of mankind; and he had shown in a hundred ways, each trifling if taken by itself, but all together indicating unmistakably how deeply she had impressed herself upon his mind—yes, even his heart. Still, she was a woman who kept her feelings well under control, and whose whole training had been in the direction of intellect rather than emotion; whose life had been, with the single exception of the episode of her mother's death, a singularly even one, with scarcely a ripple of excitement to disturb its placid surface. Thus, while she had felt a certain degree of pleasure in the brief association she had had with Tyscovus, this was due more to the effect that his ideas had exercised upon her, than to any merely personal, physical, or mental qualities. She saw that his appearance and manners were those of a gentleman. She thought his face, though markedly different from the types of manly beauty that had hitherto come under her notice, so full of expression and so indicative of emotional and intellectual activity, that she was disposed to regard it as to her mind the handsomest she had ever seen. The tones of his voice were soft and musical, but yet free from the least trace of effeminacy, and he had that bearing of indescribable ease combined with deference, when he listened or spoke to her, that all women, from the peasant to the princess, regard as the highest homage they can receive.

She had noticed all these things, but they had not impressed her with any deep sense of his personality, beyond contributing mildly to swell the sum-total of the pleasure she had derived from his short visit.

As she sat in her bedroom looking into the fire, and surrounded with all the luxuries that wealth and refinement could procure, she thought of Tyscovus, solitary on his isolated butte, deep in the work that he had come many thousand miles to undertake. This was a fact that appealed strongly to her sympathy. It was one she could understand and respect, and now she thought it strange that, though he had been gone from Chetolah more than three whole days, and though in that time she had frequently had him before her in her mind's eye, she had never once pictured him as the exile in a strange land, far from friends, struggling against what to him must be almost insuperable obstacles in the effort to do something for the good of mankind. This she thought was true nobility. This was heroism; nothing like it had ever before come into the current of her life, and she felt herself moved as she never had before been moved. She glanced at the Dresden porcelain clock that stood on the mantelpiece before her. It was nearly eleven o'clock. Was he then sitting in his rough and lonely cabin, with not a living soul within miles of him, laboring at the book to the completion of which he was willing to devote his life? With no hope of reward, with not even the expectation of appreciation, but with the thorough disinterestedness of the scholar, the sage, the hero, he had cut loose from wealth and luxury, to do the work to which he felt himself called. How small and mean and pitiful her own life seemed by the side of that which this Polish gentleman had lived, and was living! What had she ever sacrificed? Nothing! She had lived in affluence and ease throughout her whole existence, and would probably continue to do so should she survive to be a hundred years old; and she would in all likelihood keep on doing, according to her light and her powers, the work that came in her way. There was no heroism in this. There was not even self-denial.

She covered her face with her hands so as to shut out the sight of the blazing fire. Yes, there might be self-denial, even heroism, in it, after all; but could she make the sacrifice? Was it a woman's duty to give her life to those pursuits for which men were better fitted than she? Did not the life she was leading unfit her for those responsibilities which Nature had imposed on her sex? Had she mistaken her vocation? For what purpose was she in the world? These were startling questions. She removed her hands. It was eleven o'clock. She had sat for one hour thinking, and had settled nothing. She sighed as she rose and prepared to go to bed. "At any rate," she said, "I will write to Mr. Darwin and inform him of the results of my experiments."

CHAPTER XX.

"THREE CHEERS FOR TYSCOVUS!"

On the day following Lal's return home after her visit to the butte, Tyscovus managed to concentrate his attention on his book, and had done, by the time evening arrived, a good day's work, which, although not up to his usual standard of clearness and conciseness, was nevertheless such as with a little revision would do very well. He was writing his treatise in English, which, as the reader will have perceived, he spoke grammatically and with a proper knowledge of the value of words, except perhaps in the one instance of that of "love" to express the state of his feeling toward Theodora Willis.

He was sitting, as was his wont after eating his frugal evening meal, in front of the large fire that the increasing coldness of the nights now rendered necessary. He was smoking his third pipe. It was his custom to smoke six before doing a little more work preparatory to going to bed. He retired early, rarely being up after nine o'clock, and rising in the morning with the sun. He never smoked through the day; tobacco with him excited recollections, not original thought, and hence he could not indulge while at his work, and he was using his brain to create ideas.

But in the evening it was different. Then was the time for recalling to mind those events that had impressed themselves upon him and that had no special relation with his work, and then it was that his pipe came to his aid with its soothing and reminiscent power.

As he sat smoking the meerschaum he had brought with him, the color of which would have excited the envy of a college student, many thoughts of his recent visit to Chetolah passed through his mind. He could not avoid comparing Theodora Willis with Lal Bosler, and perceiving what directly opposite types of women they were, not only in all the elements of personal beauty, but in those of mental organization in perhaps even a more marked degree. Theodora had at first astonished him, and had demolished several ideal idols that he had been worshiping for many years. In the beginning, this had unpleasantly shocked him, but, before he had been longer than a few minutes in her society, the charm of her personal appearance and the sweetness of her manners had swept away the barriers that his education had erected against the inroads of women, and he had been brought to confess that he had been wrong in many of the notions that he had regarded as being essentially sacred, and secure from all chance of eradication.

His prejudices against Lal were of a different character, and were due to ideas that had, as it were, been born in him and been strengthened with every moment of his existence. His family was the very oldest in Poland; he was entitled to bear twenty-four quarterings of nobility on his coat-of-arms; his ancestors had been nobles before those of the Emperor of Russia were heard of; a *mésalliance* had never been contracted by any son or daughter of his house; his own personal nature was refined and delicate; he hated dirt and rudeness of speech and uncouth manners, and mean, low ideas and ignorance. All these things were an abomination to him, and he had always shunned as far as practicable those persons, men or women, in whom they were exhibited. And he had done this not rudely or unkindly, but with that gentle, almost deferential, though sufficiently positive air that disarmed while it repelled. Lal had exhibited, when he had first made her acquantance, many of

the most repulsive qualities in his category of bad traits, but even then there were a winsomeness in her ways, a frankness, an enthusiasm, a passionate devotion to the object she had in view, that had strongly impressed him, and that, as she had shown them in her late interview, had fairly captured him mind and body. The image of her, prostrate on the ground before him, her arms clasped around his knees, pouring out her very soul in her homely but fervid words in a prayer for his welfare, was ever before him. The soft, wonderfully musical voice was constantly in his ears, and yet she was low-born, the daughter of a murderer and a horse-thief, who, in all probability, would ere long end his days on a gallows or some other arrangement for hanging him by the neck; but her eyes were the softest and the most loving he had ever seen, her smile one that a guardian angel might have envied, and he had reason to believe that she was not inherently vulgar. No woman, he thought, with a smile like hers could be, and the faults she had were such as resulted from her associations, and were hence remediable through the influence of education and refined society.

Yes, but her father was a drunken beast, against whom every honest man's hand was raised; and her mother, as he had seen her, a commonplace, ignorant, degraded sloven, who had fallen almost as low in the social scale as her husband. To connect himself with these people would be to outrage all the traditions of his family, to violate every principle of sociology bearing upon the point for which he had ever contended. True, he might marry her and educate her as had often been done before in like cases; or he might wait till she had, under the guardianship of his friend Doctor Willis, received the scholastic benefits of the murdered Don Manuel Vaca's money. And then in either case he could take her away to a land where Jim Bosler and his wife had never been known.

Upon full consideration he concluded that the mere fact that she was the daughter of a murderer and horse-thief ought not, if justice went for anything, and she herself were worthy, to count in the scale against her. That far his prejudices could be overcome, without much strain upon his principles, by a simple and direct appeal to his sense of right. But the idea of such an intimate association with the two Boslers, father and mother, as must of necessity exist were he to marry Lal and remain at the butte, was so utterly repugnant to him that he felt the alliance would be altogether out of the question. There was nothing to do, therefore, but to wait for such further developments as seemed about to take place. Lal would soon come into the possession of a fortune sufficiently large to give her every educational advantage; the doctor was a man who would certainly use the means at his disposal so as to produce the utmost possible beneficial results. She was yet young, and by the time she had received the mental and moral training of which she stood so greatly in need, both Mr. and Mrs. Bosler might have passed away from this earthly stage of existence. Yes, he must wait, and in the mean time it would be better that he should not see her again. There could be no use in their meeting at present; on the contrary, further intercourse was sure to increase the feeling, now only latent, or at least not fully developed, which they entertained for each other, and perhaps lead to additional complications.

Besides, as he resolved the matter over in his mind while he was diligently giving a deeper tinge to his meerschaum, he was not quite sure that he had been sufficiently exact in his estimation of the nature of Lal's feeling toward him. Experiencing in his own heart a passionate glow which, if not love, was certainly akin to it, he had jumped at the inference that she had been actuated by a like emotion, when, in fact, it might have been nothing stronger

than gratitude she was cherishing. He was not, however, the man to run much risk of being deceived in a matter of this kind. No one probably ever had less vanity than he; instead of exalting, he was constantly in his own mind depreciating himself. He knew all his short-comings, and was aware that others perceived them. He would have felt humiliated had he thought himself capable of believing a woman to be in love with him when she was simply polite, or kind, or evincing gratitude. No, he could not have been mistaken. There was a look in Lal's eyes, when he raised her to her feet, that had never been there before for him, at least, and which revealed to him the very instant when the spirit of love took possession of her heart.

Suddenly, without a moment's warning, the harsh clamor of a brass band, apparently at his very door, rang out upon the evening air in such ear-piercing and discordant sounds, that he thought for a moment that pandemonium had broken loose, and that all the fiends of the lower regions had united together for the purpose of producing a noise that would split his head. He jumped to his feet and listened. For a moment he thought it was just possible that the discordant strains were intended for the Scottish air, "Hail to the chief who in triumph advances." Without having the least idea of what it all meant, he flung the door wide open, and then beheld a sight that filled him with the most utter astonishment. There on the plateau, arranged in the form of a semicircle, stood fully fifty men, several of them carrying transparencies, on which were printed in large letters such sentences as "Law above License," "Virtue, Liberty, and Independence," and one that especially excited his wondering curiosity, "Tyscovus and Reform." As soon as he made his appearance on the plateau the band ceased playing, and a stentorian voice exclaimed, "Three cheers for Tyscovus!" These were given with a will, and were supplemented in true or-

thodox style with a "tiger." Before he could inquire the meaning of what he now saw was intended as a compliment, but of the nature of which he had not the slightest idea, one of the party, whom he at once recognized as Mr. Higgins, stepped a little in advance of the rest, and, addressing him, said:

"Captain Tyscovus! It becomes my pleasin' dooty, in the absence of our chairman, Doctor Willis, who has been called out perfessionally, and tharfore couldn't come, to inform you that the freemen of the Fourth Legislative Council Deestrick have met in their majesty and might, and have nominated you as their candidate for the Legislative Council."

"Three cheers for Tyscovus!" shouted some one in the crowd. Three deafening yells, and a "tiger" worse than the rest, awoke the echoes in the "Little Cañon," and started several coyotes to barking.

"The people," continued the orator, "ain't sich fools as they're often took to be. They looked round for a man as they thought would be safe to give their interests to, and it didn't take 'em long to make up their minds. They looked down here toward the butte, and thar they seen a son o' freedom livin' the life of the good citizen; thar they seen one as had suffered for his country; thar they seen one as bearded the lion in his den, and had spoke out like a brave man and a second Dannel, who warn't afeared to tell the tyrant of Roosia jist what he thought of him. And the man they seen was the same as is now standin' afore me, Captain John Tyscovus, the honest man's friend, and the next councilor from the Fourth Deestrick. Fellow-citizens! I propose three cheers and a tiger for Captain Tyscovus." Again the assemblage of freemen lifted up their voices, and the band added to the din by a series of violent demonstrations, evidently intended for a fanfare.

Tyscovus had, by the time Mr. Higgins finished his

speech, obtained a tolerably correct idea of the object of the demonstration. To say that he was surprised would very inadequately express the state of his feelings. Was it a joke? Did these people really wish him to represent them in the Territorial Legislature, and had they formally nominated him for a seat in that body? He did not know what to say. He could only bow his thanks, and shake Mr. Higgins's outstretched hand. The latter, however, soon relieved him from his embarrassment.

"You see, captain," said this gentleman, in a low tone, "I knowed as you didn't have no liquor around, and I knowed as the boys would be thirsty after their cold ride, so I jist turned a kag o' old Bourbon into my wagon, and had it drawn up the hill while the others left their teams below. It's here now, jist behind the house. I'll git it and start a fire, and then, while the boys is warmin' themselves inside and out, you and me and Colonel Brattle will jist go in and talk matters over, and then you kin come out and make the boys a speech. I've got a letter here for you from the doctor." So saying, Mr. Higgins produced the epistle, and then going into the shadow of the house, soon reappeared, rolling a keg on the ground by kicking it with his foot.

"Boys," he said, addressing the assembly, "you'll find some fat wood round thar, and you'd better start a rousin' fire as'll not only warm you, but will sarve to light up a good part of the Fourth Deestrick, and show 'em as we ain't goin to hide our light under a bushel-measure. And here's somethin' better, as Captain Tyscovus told me to give you, with his best wishes for the success of the cause. It's a prime article; none o' your rot-gut as they sells over at The Cañon, and thar's a darned sight more of it, too, at my store in Hellbender." Again the welkin rang with cheers, and, following the directions given them, the "boys" made a big fire, and, broaching the cask of Bour-

bon, proceeded at once to make themselves merry by befuddling their brains with its contents.

While they were engaged in this pleasing occupation, Tyscovus, with Mr. Higgins and Colonel Brattle, entered the house and proceeded to the discussion of the important business before them.

Tyscovus opened the doctor's letter, which he found contained an open note from Theodora. He read first what the doctor had to say. The communication was a long one and placed the matter clearly before him, closing with an earnest request that, disregarding any merely private considerations that might suggest themselves, he would aid in bringing about such a condition of affairs in the Territory as all good citizens must desire should be initiated at as early a day as possible. Then he opened Theodora's note. The envelope was dainty to begin with, the paper linen; it was unsealed. There was no gaudy monogram or armorial bearing at the head of the sheet. Only the words "Chetolah, Hellbender," printed from an engraved plate in dark-blue ink, and in modest letters. It read:

"DEAR MR. TYSCOVUS: You have now an opportunity for doing good that I hope, for all our sakes, you will not disregard. It may seem to you a strange thing that, after being less than a week among us, you should be offered a seat in the Legislature, but things move rapidly in this country. If they did not, they would not move at all. The occurrence, however, is, I assure you, not an unusual one in our newly-formed Territories. My father feels more on the subject than he would venture to write. He thinks the matter ought to be left to your own judgment, without solicitation. I think otherwise, and therefore I ask you to yield to the wishes of your friends.

"Yours, sincerely,

"THEODORA WILLIS."

Tyscovus sat, holding the note in his hand, and almost making up his mind to accept the nomination and enter energetically upon his canvass. In the midst of his meditations, Mr. Higgins, doubtless thinking that the nominee had had sufficient time to consider the arguments of the doctor and his daughter, broke in with his own:

"You see, captain, ef we don't git you, thar's no man as kin lick Luke Kittle; and ef he goes in, thar won't be no safety in these parts for any man's life or property. I don't suppose as you're naturalized, but thar ain't no needcessity for that ef you'll come over to Hellbender right away and declare your intentions."

"So far as that is concerned," answered Tyscovus, "I am more than half an American already. My mother was a New-Yorker, and several years ago, while on a visit to her family, I took the opportunity of declaring my intention to become a citizen of the United States. All I would have to do now would be to go and be naturalized, and that can be done at any time. So that, if that were all, I should have no obstacle to interpose to your wishes. I am deeply flattered at the great honor you have done me. I am sincerely touched here in my heart," he continued, laying both hands on his breast, "but I do really doubt my ability to serve you, and I came here to do a special work, which, if I accept this nomination, must be deferred for a long time—perhaps altogether given up."

"As to your fitness," said Colonel Brattle, joining for the first time in the conversation, "we'll resk that. Didn't I see you when you was took all on a suddent by the committee, and didn't you behave like a trump? No man could 'a' done better. Thar warn't no sign of a white feather about you, and you talked just as 'don't-care-a-darn' like, as though you mought be speakin' to your own brother. As to the work you speak of—well, o' course, you knows better than us; but ef thar's any more important

work to be done than savin' the Territory from murderers and thieves, I'd like to know what it is.—Wouldn't you, Higgins?"

"I would that," answered the gentleman addressed. "You see, captain, it ain't no use. The boys want you; you're qualified right up to the hub, and, even ef you don't like it, you ought to go in jist to save the country. Now, say you will, and I'll tell the boys, and then you'll make a little speech and they'll drink your health, and we'll go home and run you in by the biggest vote as the 'Old Fourth' ever polled!"

Tyscovus reflected. There was a good deal of truth in what these men said in their homely but expressive language. Here was a practical way at once opened to him of benefiting the human race, not only directly through his vote and personal influence in the legislative body in which it was proposed to place him, but by means to which they did not allude. For, not knowing the nature of his studies, and of the work upon which he was engaged, they were not prepared to call his attention to the important point in question. His keen perception had, however, at once grasped the situation. He knew that, no matter how good his book might be, there would be a difficulty in getting the public to read it. He knew that the critics would give opinions about it according to their preconceived notions or their personal feelings; and that, too, without having read it, or perhaps even without having seen it. The trouble would be in getting an audience, and years might elapse before the subject could be hammered into the heads of an apathetic or hostile public.

But as a member of the Legislature of a flourishing Territory, there was a field for effective work spread out before him. He would be at once thrown into the whirl of politics, and would make speeches, which would be reported in the newspapers and spread broadcast over the land. He

would have occasion to introduce bills embodying his views, and, though the field was not an extensive one, it was something, and it might lead to his being called to still higher positions and more extensive opportunities.

Then he read Theodora's letter again. It was a pleasant epistle, couched in just the right language; making a dignified request, but not venturing on importunity. And then the character of the stationery used showed that she had not, in spite of her scientific studies, neglected one of the little graces of life. He had met in London and New York two or three scientific and literary women, and they were slovenly, not only in their dress but in their ways. It was a small thing, perhaps, to judge a woman by, but it would have been something to almost every man of gentle tastes, and to Tyscovus it meant a great deal. Yes, Theodora was not losing her femininity. Had she been retrograding in this respect she would have written on dingy, perhaps even ruled, paper; she would have used an envelope with "If not delivered in ten days, return to——" printed in one corner; whereas Tiffany never sent out a more perfect *ensemble* for epistolary use than that employed by Theodora. It was pleasant to him to handle and read her æsthetic letter, and it helped, to no unimportant extent, to bring him to a decision.

"Gentlemen," he said, addressing the two committeemen, "I accept the nomination. I will do my best to be elected, and I thank you and the people of the Fourth Council District for the confidence they place in me."

"Bully for you!" exclaimed Mr. Higgins, jumping to his feet, and grasping one hand while Colonel Brattle shook the other. "Now come out and speak to the boys, who air jist sp'ilin' to hear a word from you."

In the mean time "the boys" had kindled an enormous fire, and were beginning to feel the effects of the whisky with which they had been provided. As soon as the three

gentlemen made their appearance, they gathered round the passage-way, anxiously expecting to be informed of the result of the conference. Mr. Higgins was the first to speak. He said:

"It's all right, boys! It gives me pleasure to introduce to you our fellow-citizen, Captain John Tyscovus, the next councilor from the old Fourth. Although a native of Poland, the country which the tyrant of Roosia holds down with his foot on her neck, his mother was an American, a descendant of one of the old Revolutionary families as fought, bled, and died in the defense of their liberties. Every one knows that a man gits his good qualities from his mother, and tharfore Captain Tyscovus has got 'em, and of the kind you'd like him to have. Things is all goin' wrong in this Territory. We want reform, and we can't git it from the men as holds the offices. They're too firm sot in thar ways. Kin the leper change his spots? No, fellow-citizens, he can't. Onst a leper always a leper. Everybody knows that. The doctor'll tell you it's true. He may want to change 'em; he may even want to git rid of 'em altogether, but he can't do it. Thar they stick. But he's better nor the men as we've got here to manage things. *He'd* like to change his spots. *They* don't want no reform. Fellow-citizens! I'd rather be a leper as white as snow than one o' them. We've got to take things onto our own hands, and the first step is to be took by electin' Captain Tyscovus to the Council from the Fourth Deestrick. Gentlemen! three cheers and a tiger for Captain John Tyscovus!"

Louder than before the yells were given, and they were followed by cries of "Speech! speech!" with such a degree of persistency, that Tyscovus felt doubly impelled to say a few words.

"My friends," he said, standing bareheaded before them, "your kindness so overwhelms me that I scarcely

know how to thank you in adequate terms for the honor you have done me, and for the kind way in which you have informed me of your action. I accept the nomination which you, moved, as I am sure, by a desire for the public good, have offered me. And I here declare that, if elected, I will do all in my power to promote the best interests of this wonderful and beautiful country. That you should elect me, a stranger, to be your servant, fills me with astonishment, but none the more does it diminish the grateful sense of your goodness that moves my heart. I should like to shake each one of you by the hand before we part to-night, but I hope to meet you often during the interval between now and the election. Again, my friends, I thank you."

The enthusiasm over this brief speech was immense. "The boys" danced and shouted and sang and waved their transparencies, and the band struck up what was intended by one part for the "Star-spangled Banner," and by the other for "Yankee Doodle," and which, therefore, was an incongruous though noisy and patriotic medley of such a character as to make Saint Cecilia, if she heard it, wring her hands in very anguish. Still, it served its purpose of making a noise, and expressing the exuberance of their emotions. A general hand-shaking took place; after which, with repeated cheers, the party scrambled down the butte to their wagons, which they had left below—all but Mr. Higgins and Colonel Brattle, who remained to say a few words in regard to future arrangements for conducting the canvass.

"I'll tell you what it is, captain," said Mr. Higgins, shaking Tyscovus's hand for at least the twentieth time that night, "you're the biggest man in Colorado, and you'll be one of the first Senators as goes to Congress when she's admitted into the Union.—Mind, now, what I say, Brattle, it's bound to come true—as sure as my name's Higgins."

Before they left, Tyscovus wrote short notes to the doctor and Theodora, which he intrusted to Mr. Higgins to deliver. The latter was only a few words. "You are very kind," he said. "I have done as you wish."

Then the two committee-men joined their friends, and Tyscovus heard the well-pleased party as they shouted and sang, and the brass band blowed, till they were far on their way back to Hellbender.

His manuscript and books of reference were still on the table; his complement of pipes was still unsmoked. Again he sat before his fire, his brain busy over what had occurred, and with speculations as to the possible results. At last he knocked the ashes out of his sixth pipe. Then he went very deliberately to the table, and, collecting all the books together, put them on the shelves that he had constructed. Next he gathered into a bundle all the loose sheets of his manuscript. He looked at them longingly and regretfully for a moment, and then placed them in a big chest which stood in a corner of the room. Again he gazed at them as though he were looking at them for the last time. Suddenly he closed the lid with a bang, and soon afterward went to bed.

CHAPTER XXI.

"$5,000—LUKE KITTLE."

On the morning after the important financial transaction consummated by Mr. Bosler, that gentleman awoke, notwithstanding his liberal potations of the day before, feeling refreshed and vigorous, and ready for any arduous mental or physical labor to which he might have to devote his energies. It was his intention to go home that day, after attending to the business matters that he had mainly in view in making his visit to The Cañon; but the bargain entered into with "The Gulcher" had been so influential in sustaining his change of plans in regard to leaving that part of the country that some of them had become unnecessary. With Lal the wife of Mr. Luke Kittle, there would no longer be any special reason why he should sunder the ties that bound him to The Cañon and its vicinity. The house that he rented out as a "saloon" was bringing in a fair rent, and he decided, therefore, not to offer it for sale. There were thus only a few debts to collect, and purchases of provisions to make, and then he was ready to go back to Bighorn Spring, and attend to the matter of inducing Lal to accept Mr. Kittle as her husband.

The more he thought of the subject, the more the anticipations that he had originally formed in regard to the difficulties before him were confirmed. That Lal would quietly consent to aid him in his schemes, he did not for a moment believe. He knew, on the contrary, that her in-

dignation at the sense of the outrage would be intense, and he was well enough acquainted with his daughter's temperament to understand just what Lal's intense indignation meant. If he could have gotten rid of his bargain without being obliged to return to Mr. Kittle the five thousand dollars he had received, and renouncing his right and title to the remaining moiety of his bonus, there was little doubt in his mind as to what he would do. He experienced, therefore, a very mild degree of regret; but this by no means extended to the point of giving up two sums actual and prospective of five thousand dollars each. He would rather have resigned a dozen daughters to as many Luke Kittles than do that.

As to conscientious scruples, Mr. Bosler was, probably, less troubled with them than any other individual in that or any other Territory. If he had been examined upon the subject, he would, probably—if there were no reasons for lying—have admitted that he had never experienced a feeling of regret due to any violation of his sense of right. In fact, he had no such principles in his mental organization. He was often sorry, but that was on account of some personal inconvenience resulting to himself, or from a knowledge that a different line of conduct from that which he had pursued would have resulted more advantageously to his well-being, or, in rare instances and to a slight degree, when things had gone badly in reference to his wife or daughter, the only two human beings for whom he had the least affection. When, however, their interests clashed with his, it did not take him long to decide in which direction his duty called him.

But although he looked forward with apprehension to the contest he was sure to have with Lal, he had no doubt in regard to the ultimate result. She might protest, and storm, and denounce; she might gnash her teeth with rage, and lash herself into a fury—she should marry Luke

Kittle. She might beg, and importune, and supplicate, on her bended knees; she might appeal to him by every tie that bound them together; she might cry to God to come to her aid—nevertheless, she should marry Luke Kittle! On this point, there was no uncertainty in his mind, no wavering in his decision. So far as a man could determine any future event, he had determined this. Still, had there been time, he would have postponed his return, and thus have put off as long as possible the inevitable struggle; but there were barely nine days remaining before the hour fixed for the wedding, and it would, probably, take all of them to reduce Lal to the proper degree of subjection. No, he could not delay, he must face the girl, tigress though she might prove to be, and fight it out with her at once.

Accordingly, after drinking a couple of stiff horns of his favorite beverage, just to set him up for the day, and eating a hearty breakfast—for, strange to say, Mr. Bosler's addiction to whisky had never yet interfered with his appetite, or with his bodily health generally—he hitched up his team, and drove about the town, occupied with the affairs that required his personal attention. His business settled, mostly to his satisfaction, he went to the bank and got the five thousand dollars he had deposited there the previous day. Then he bade adieu to Mr. Crump and one or two other sympathizing cronies, and departed from the town, without having encountered any of Hallam's particular friends, and richer by at least five thousand dollars than when he left Bighorn Spring. Thus far, Fortune had evidently favored him.

On his way back, he revolved in his mind the subject that at that time was uppermost in his thoughts. How should he begin the attack? Should he tell Mrs. Bosler, and allow her to bear the first burst of Lal's wrath? Should he try persuasion before resorting to force? Yes,

undoubtedly, mild means were preferable to begin with. But he had very little faith in the efficacy of any inducements of a conciliatory character. He was not strong in the use of blandishments, and he knew so well Lal's opinion of Mr. Luke Kittle as to be quite sure that all such measures would be absolutely without avail. "It ain't no use tryin' to fool her," he said, as he rolled along over the prairie road. "She's got as much sense as a bob-tail mule, and she hates Luke Kittle worse nor he war the devil. Coaxin' ain't a-goin' to do nothin' with her, except, may be, to make her more obstreperous. Children," he added, after taking a long drink from a bottle with which he had provided himself, in addition to a keg containing about five gallons of his favorite brand of whisky—"children ain't what they used to be.

"Now, when I was a boy, ef the old man said, 'Jim, do this or that,' I knowed I had to do it, or I'd ketch pertic'ler fits. But, now, boys and gals does jist about as they've a mind to, and the poor fathers and mothers has got to sit by and stand it. It's darned hard, it is," continued Mr. Bosler, with a sigh, "to see them as you've brought into the world, or raised from the time they was babies, and looked after, most times to your own onconvenience, turn ag'in you in your old age, and marry some other fellow as you don't know nothin' about!

"It's darned lucky Vaca's out of the way. Lal, I rather guess, had a sort of a sneakin' fancy for the blamed nigger. By jingo! I'll tell her Vaca's dead, afore I let her know what she's got to do. That'll git one snag out o' the way anyhow!" This bright thought caused a gleesome chuckle to be emitted from Mr. Bosler's throat, and kept him in a good humor till he entered the timber that lay between Bighorn Spring and the prairie. Then, as his progress became impeded by the obstacles that Nature had placed in the road, and that man had not yet seen fit to remove.

his thoughts flowed with greater readiness, until, when he reached the cabin, he had fully resolved upon the line of action to follow.

All things considered, it was not a bad plan, and its conception showed that, under more favorable auspices, Mr. Bosler might have made his mark in the world in a more elevated line of operations than had fallen to his lot. He felt quite sure of his wife's loyalty and entire submission to his wishes in everything. He determined, therefore, to inform her of what had been resolved upon between him and "The Gulcher." He came to this conclusion, not so much from a desire to admit her into his confidence, as from the conviction that her assistance would be absolutely indispensable for the furtherance of his scheme. But as to Lal, he decided to give her no hint of what was in store for her till the very moment that the marriage was to take place. Then, as he conceived, she would be so overwhelmed by the suddenness with which the revelation would be made, that active resistance would be impossible, and she would fall an easy prey to Mr. Luke Kittle's wiles. Either this would be the case, or the outburst would be so violent that exhaustion and reaction would follow, and she would be like a piece of dough, capable of being molded into any shape he might choose.

In the mean time, everything was to be made ready, and, at the appointed hour, Mr. Kittle, accompanied by a justice of the peace, of whom there were several devoted to his interests, would arrive, and the ceremony would take place almost as a matter of course. It might be necessary for him to exert his paternal authority to its utmost limit. He intended that there should be no half-way measures on this score, and that, if necessary, he would resort to physical force, even to the extent of dragging her before the magistrate and knocking each word of consent out of her with a blow. He could not recollect that he had ever struck his

daughter; but he would beat her now, before he would allow her to defeat the scheme the success of which was so essential to his welfare. Such an emergency had never before this occurred to him in his relations with his daughter, but it was on him now, and he meant to see it through, regardless of consequences. "As ef," he muttered when he had arrived at this conclusion, "I'd allow her to stand atween me and ten thousand dollars! I ain't that sort of a steer. Ef I am, you may call me a liar." From all of which it will be seen that Mr. Bosler was a man of resolution, and fully resolved to be master in his own family.

At the same time, while preserving absolute secrecy relative to his intentions in the interests of Mr. Luke Kittle, he determined to inform Lal at once of the death of Vaca, and hence allow her to see the hopelessness of any attachment she might have formed for the Mexican. He was by no means certain that there was such a predilection on Lal's part. She was extremely reticent in regard to all affairs that simply concerned herself, and was not accustomed to resort to him, either as a confidant or for counsel, in any matters in which she might require advice. Still, he thought that at times she had evinced more than an ordinary interest in Vaca by defending him when attacked, as he had been very often by him, and by speaking her mind freely; as for instance when she one day saw her father riding a horse that she knew had a short time before belonged to the Mexican. When she was quite a child, Vaca had given her a snow-white lamb, and this gift had made a great impression upon her. At a ball that had taken place at The Cañon not long before, he had, as the reader already knows, risked his life for her in a way that, though probably superfluous, impressed Lal, who had only her own impetuous and ignorant notions to guide her, as an act of great heroism and devotion. To have a man in love with her who was so infatuated as to stab another

who, he thought, was too profuse in his attentions, and then to be the recipient of a pistol-shot in return, were facts that had appealed strongly to her feelings. There are few women in any walk of life who would not be touched by such evidences of intense devotion.

But, with all these circumstances before him, Mr. Bosler was unable to arrive at any certain opinion relative to the state of Lal's feelings toward Vaca. However, what was the use of thinking of the man at all? He was dead and out of the way!

He resolved, too, that he would omit no opportunity of singing Mr. Luke Kittle's praises, so far as that could be done without awakening Lal's suspicions. In this way, he thought, perhaps upon the principle that drops of water falling upon a rock continually, wear it away, he might succeed in impressing his daughter with a sense of Mr. Kittle's many virtues, and hence cause her to look with favor upon the idea of a matrimonial alliance with that gentleman.

It was late in the afternoon when Mr. Bosler emerged from the timber and saw the smoke rising from the chimney of his cabin at Bighorn Spring. A short drive across the stretch of open prairie brought him to the door, and in a moment Mrs. Bosler and Lal, hearing the noise made by the wagon, came out to greet him. The women were certainly greatly relieved at his appearance, and Mrs. Bosler had to admit to herself that her gloomy prognostications relative to her never seeing him again had, as had often been the case before, failed to be verified.

Mr. Bosler was in such exuberant good spirits that he kissed them both several times, inquired how they got along without the "old man," and whether they were not glad to have him once more as their companion and protector. "I couldn't get along without you two," he said, as, with an arm around the waist of each, he walked into the house,

after unhitching his horses and picketing them out to grass. "I jist felt so lonesome-like all the time I was at The Cañon, that I couldn't 'a' smiled ef a angel had tickled my ear with a peacock-feather. No, blow me ef I could! You see I'm a family-man, and now I'm come back to stay till we leaves these parts for good. By jingo!" he continued, excitedly, "I forgot!" and, dropping his arms from the waists of his two loved ones, he rushed back to the wagon, in the bottom of which lay the bag of gold which, in the excitement incident to his return, had escaped his memory. "To think o' me bein' sich a darned fool!" he exclaimed, putting the bag under his arm as though it contained anything else than gold, and returning to the house with as *nonchalant* a manner as he could assume on the spur of the moment. "You'll find a good lot o' things in the wagon, Moll," he resumed, "and you and Lal mought as well fetch 'em in. Take care o' that kag, now," he exclaimed, with increased interest; "it's got some prime old Bourbon in it as Mr. Kittle give me. He's the risin' man in these parts, I guess," he went on, with apparent indifference. "He's goin' to be 'lected to the Legislature, and I wouldn't be opset much ef I heerd he was app'inted Gov'nor." He glanced furtively at Lal as he uttered these praises of his friend, but the shaft missed its aim, for, before he had finished, she and her mother had left the house to attend to the removal of the supplies, without either evincing the least interest in the subject of Mr. Bosler's laudation.

"Is thar any news, Jim?" said his wife, as she and Lal entered, carrying between them a big side of bacon.

"It strikes me," said Mr. Bosler, in a grieved tone of voice, "that news ain't no consequence to you. I started out jist now to tell you somethin', and you both rushes out o' the house while I was a-speakin'. Yes, thar's plenty o' news. For one thing, Manuel Vaca's dead." As he uttered the words, he fixed his one eye on Lal.

"Manuel Vaca dead!" she exclaimed, letting go her hold of the bacon. "Who killed him?"

"Well, you see—" began Mr. Bosler.

"Who killed him?" repeated Lal, going up to her father, who cowered a little before her look and manner. "Did you?"

"No, I didn't. What would I kill him for? He never did nothin' to me. Ef you'd keep quiet, I'd tell you all about it."

"I'm glad o' that," resumed Lal. "It don't make no difference to me who killed him, as long as you didn't. I'm sorry he's dead," she continued; "he was kind to me, and I always liked sich." She stopped, and for a moment seemed to be thinking. Then she took hold of the bacon, and she and her mother put it on a shelf on one side of the fireplace.

"And you don't keer to know who killed him!" said Mr. Bosler, sneeringly; "perhaps he died o' the mountain-fever, which is very bad now at The Cañon, or perhaps he was blowed up in a mine, or perhaps he killed himself jist because you didn't keer nothin' for him." He turned his eye on his danghter as he spoke, as though anxious to watch the effect of what he intended to be a soul-harrowing speech.

"No, I don't keer. So long as he's dead, it don't make no difference who killed him. He was kind to me, and I'm sorry. I guess he was the best o' all them Cañon men; for he had a heart, and there ain't many on 'em as has got one." She walked away to the wagon, but presently returned with a small sack of flour in her arms, which she placed on the shelf with the bacon.

Mr. Bosler was, to say the least, disappointed in the effect that had been produced by his announcement. Evidently she had not been in love with Vaca, however kindly she may have felt toward him. He was in doubt

whether to tell her the whole truth or not. To do so might prejudice her still more against "The Gulcher"; while not to do so might result in her receiving the information from other sources, and without the peculiar coloring which he could give to the circumstances attending the murder. Finally, he determined to tell her.

"You see," he said, as she was going back to the wagon for another package, "he tried for to kill a friend o' mine and he got massacreed himself; and that friend was the people's man, Luke Kittle. Ef I'd been in his place I'd 'a' done it too."

"Luke Kittle!" exclaimed Lal, turning pale; "did *he* kill Vaca!"

"Well, he did! and ef he hadn't, Vaca would 'a' killed him sure."

"Was it about—about—"

"No, it warn't about you, ef that's what you're goin' to ask. It war over a monte-table."

"I'm glad it warn't about me," said Lal, with a sigh of relief. "It don't make no difference to me who killed him, but ef Luke Kittle did it I guess I know whar the blame ought to lay." With which words she again left the room.

"Well, by jingo!" exclaimed Mr. Bosler, "of all the cool cusses as ever I seen, she beats 'em all! She don't keer no more about him than ef he war a dead rabbit. It's all right, I guess, though," he continued, after refreshing himself with a draught from the bottle of whisky he had brought from The Cañon, and which was emptied by this last demand made upon it—"it's all right, for thar won't be no snags to git out o' the way, and we'll boost right along under a full head o' steam." Then, feeling somewhat overcome with fatigue and excitement, and, above all, by the effects of the vile compound he had partaken of so liberally, Mr. Bosler staggered off to the next room, and, with-

out removing any of his clothing, threw himself on the bed, and was soon in a state of alcoholic stupor of so profound a character as to prevent the possibility of his doing harm in any direction for several hours to come.

In the mean time, Lal and her mother finished unloading the wagon, and then, leaving Mr. Bosler in a condition of unconsciousness, from which they knew by experience he would not be aroused till the next morning, they sat down to discuss the death of Vaca and a few other items of news that Mr. Bosler had brought home with him. From a remark that he had let drop, they had inferred that he had made all the necessary arrangements for leaving the country, and the circumstance was a source of great joy to both. While thus engaged, Lal perceived lying on the floor near where her father had been sitting a traveling-bag, which she recognized as the one that he had left in the wagon and had subsequently brought into the house. She picked it up and soon ascertained, from its weight and feeling, that it was full of coin. She was delighted with the discovery, for she argued that he had sold his property and had collected the money due him, and had brought back the proceeds in good, hard cash. She turned the bag over in her hands and observed some figures and letters that had at first escaped her attention. Taking it to the open door, she held it in the light and read, "$5,000, LUKE KITTLE."

CHAPTER XXII.

"MR. BOSLER'S TWELFTH VICTIM."

LAL'S interview with Tyscovus was the most important event that had hitherto occurred to her in the whole course of her life. It was the turning-point in her career. She had reached the acme of one phase of her existence. She was now to enter upon another kind of a life in which all the old ideas that tended to drag down her moral nature were to be left behind. She had been made to comprehend in the short space of half an hour that there was something higher and better in humanity than she had ever before thought possible. True, she had several times experienced glimpses of this nobler life, notably when she had read the story of Saint Hedwiges; but now she had been one of the actors. She had participated in it, and the principles which, till then, she had held but by a fragile tenure, were now confirmed past all liability of relapse, as integral parts of her mental organization. The advance had, indeed, been greater than at first she could altogether comprehend; not that she was by any means deficient in intellect; on the contrary, she was possessed of an unusually sound and robust mind. Her perceptive powers were quick and accurate, and her capacity for understanding a subject, and for judging correctly, was such as many persons of good natural abilities only attain after long training and exercise. She was deficient in knowledge. She had very much to learn and scarcely

less to unlearn, but there was certainly no lack of mental potentiality.

She hurried through the "Little Cañon" and over the *mesa* and across the timber till she reached Bighorn Spring, her mind in a whirl of confusion, but a feeling of intense joy pervading her whole being, giving lightness to her step and preventing all sense of fatigue, though she had run nearly every foot of the way.

It was quite dark when she arrived at the cabin. She stopped for a moment before entering and looked in through the uncurtained window. Her mother was there before the fire, preparing the evening meal, and evidently expecting her return; for the table was set for two. Should she tell her what had occurred? No, not all. She felt that it would be impossible for her to lay bare her heart even to the gaze of her mother. She could not speak of Tyscovus's words of sympathy and kindness, or of his gracious actions, except in the most general way, or of her own humiliation, and tears and gladness, without feeling that she would be profaning the trust that he had said he placed in her, and violating the sense of honor that he had done so much to evoke. She might never see him again. She never expected to see him again, but the memory of the meeting was to be henceforth sacred between him and her, and to live in her heart for evermore.

She opened the door and stepped into the room.

"Gracious, Lal, how you skeered me!" exclaimed her mother, looking round from her cooking operations. "You see I knowed you would come back, and I was jist gittin' ready to give you somethin' to eat. Well, did you have a good time?"

"Yes, mam; it's all right. He's a good man, and he give me the book to keep, and he writ my name in it and the day of the month, so as I'd never forgit; though thar ain't no chance o' that."

"I knowed he would act decent, and that thar warn't no chance of his sendin' you to jail. Let me see what he's writ in the book."

Lal took the volume from the bosom of her frock, and opening it, read with some difficulty: "Lal; from her friend, John Tyscovus. The Butte, September 13, 1873." Then her mother examined it and noted also the fact that Tyscovus had marked certain passages which he had wished to impress upon Lal's attention.

"I guess it's all right, Lal," she said, returning the book to her daughter; "it's a pretty nice sort of a keepsake. But he's got plenty o' them, I s'pose."

"But this is the life o' his great-great-great-grandfather as lived more 'an two hundred years ago. And he valeys it very much."

"Then I don't see why as he should 'a' give it to you."

"I don't see neither," said Lal, not anxious to continue the conversation, fearing that discussion might require explanation. "Ef the supper's ready, I guess we mought as well eat it."

Nothing more was said on the subject. It was one that Mrs. Bosler in its actualities would have been utterly unable to comprehend, and this Lal instinctively knew. She therefore shrank from explanations, and went to bed with the bloom on her heart untouched by vulgar contact.

All the next day she was quiet and thoughtful. When alone or at her work she had always been a great singer of two or three homely songs; but now she went about her household duties without a word or a note, evidently preoccupied with the events of the preceding day, and with the thoughts that the recollection of them evoked. But the return of her father had brought her back to the consideration of the stern realities of the life to which she was subjected. She was clever enough to see that, in the remarks that he had made concerning Luke Kittle, there

was an underlying motive that he did not intend her to perceive. At first she was not quite sure that he was telling the truth in regard to Vaca's death. She thought, for the moment, that he was the murderer, and, had her suspicions been confirmed, she had resolved, with the rapidity of lightning, not to live another hour under the roof of such a wholesale butcher of men as was her father. She intended to walk out of the house with her mother, if she could pursuade that feeble-minded woman to go with her, but alone if the worst came to the worst.

She never had had more than a liking for Vaca. He had always treated her with more refinement of manner and kindness than had any other man at The Cañon, and she appreciated his consideration, but the idea of loving him, and of becoming his wife, had never entered her mind, except occasionally, as a possible alternative, should Luke Kittle be in any way forced upon her. She had thought that, in that contingency, it might happen. Then she would go away and be married to Vaca. His death was a shock to her; a greater one, in fact, than she had allowed to appear, for, aside from the suddenness with which the event was communicated to her, she felt that she had lost one of the friends who would have stood by her in any trouble she might have relative to Mr. Luke Kittle. But she did not love him, had never loved him; and now her whole heart was filled with another, whom she regarded with feelings almost reaching adoration, though it was not possible that she would ever be anything to him, or he anything to her but an image that she would keep in the depths of her soul as long as she lived. She felt no regret when she thought of the hopelessness of the love that had overwhelmed her. The idea of marrying Tyscovus never entered her mind. She was content as things were, though she would have liked to be with him, to hear him speak with a melody and a gentleness such as were

altogether new to her, and every now and then to meet a merciful and loving look such as had fallen upon her when he raised her from her knees. Then it was that her heart had gone out to him, and she had dashed out of the house frightened, yet wonderfully happy, with the new emotion she experienced.

Then, when she found the bag of gold, with the amount and Luke Kittle's name written upon it in large and distinct characters, her suspicions that some wrong act had been consummated were awakened. She knew that her father could have had no honest transaction with that man that would require the payment of so large a sum. Naturally, her knowledge of her father's habits led her at once to the conclusion that he had been unusually successful at the gaming-table. Then she reflected that it was quite probable that, needing a bag to contain the proceeds of his sales of property and his collections of money due him, he had borrowed one that then, or at some former period, had belonged to her enemy. She never for a moment suspected the true explanation. She had repeatedly been threatened, sometimes jocularly, and at others in anger, with Luke Kittle for a husband, and she knew that her father had promised him that she should be his wife. But she had been given to understand that this had been done when he was in the reckless state into which too much whisky always brought him, and that, as soon as the effects of the potations had passed off, the promise had been repudiated. But she was well aware that she was not safe, although the apprehension had never been definitely formulated in her mind, and she had often been told by her father, when he was in a cheerful or loving mood, that he would never consent that she should ever be the wife of any man at The Cañon. His sincerity at these times was unmistakable, and often led him into making threats that bore strongly on Mr. Kittle's prospects of long life. Still, she did not feel

safe. She had witnessed many instances of her father's treachery and weakness, especially when he was drunk, and, though she believed that he loved her dearly, she did not know what a day might bring forth. Who does when a fool or a drunkard is endowed with the power of working evil?

She had, since her father's return, observed one circumstance which had excited some apprehension, and that was, the disposition that he manifested to extol Mr. Kittle; and this, shown as it was in regard to matters with which the man had no logical connection, had set her thinking. It was always a suspicious point in Mr. Bosler's conversation when he went out of his way to praise a person with whom he had had trouble. Heretofore, so far as Lal could recollect, it had invariably indicated either that her father had fully made up his mind to attack his enemy on the first favorable occasion, or that he had entered into an alliance with him to despoil a third party, or the community at large. Up to the time of discovering the bag she had been in doubt as to which of these was the factor in causing Mr. Bosler's laudations of Luke Kittle; but, putting this piece of evidence in connection with her father's speeches, she was forced to the conclusion that the "hatchet had been buried," and that she was to be the object of their common attack. She did not, however, dream that she had been as actually sold as any ox that ever stood in the shambles.

The morning after Mr. Bosler's return that gentleman was up bright and early looking after his horses, and attending to such other work about the household as he thought he might perform without sacrifice of dignity or comfort. He had not yet told his wife anything about his arrangements with Luke Kittle, for he had not, from the time he had thrown himself on the bed till he awoke in the morning, been in a condition to carry on a conversation. Mrs. Bosler had slept with Lal, and consequently there had

been no opportunity for taking her into his confidence while he was engaged in the simple morning toilet that usually sufficed to make him presentable. But he took the occasion of his first meeting with her to call her aside, and to make the important communication, which, as was customary, was interspersed with such lies and perversions of the truth as he thought would tend to put his own conduct in the most favorable light.

"You see, Moll," he said, "Lal ought to be lookin' 'round now for a settlement in life, and relievin' me and you of all the trouble as we've had in a-bringin' of her up. I've thought night and day about the matter. Many a time I've passed the whole night jist a-thinkin' what would be best for that gal. I'm bound to say that I've thought bad of Luke Kittle, but I think, Moll, that when a man's bin wrong, he's bound like a honest cuss to come right out and say so. That's jist the pint!" he continued, rising from the barrel on which he was sitting, and slapping one hand into the other, to give emphasis to the statement—"that's jist the p'int! He ought to come right up and face the music. 'Honesty's the best policy' in the long run.

"Well, you see, I've bin considerin' Luke Kittle. I thought about him all the day as I druv over to The Cañon, and then I thought as, perhaps, after all, I'd bin wrong. I thought as Luke was a-risin' man, well dressed in the best store-clothes, and bound to be in the Legislature makin' laws for the good of the people. Now, what, I ask you, Moll, would a honest man do under them circumstances? Jist what I did. I went up to Luke, and says I: 'Luke, here's my hand. I guess I've bin wrong, and I begs your pardon.' At first, he was a little offish, but at last he come round, and then we fixed things up about Lal, and she's a-goin' to marry him a week from Saturday, right here, and we'll be jist as jolly as crickets. Lal's a good gal, and she'll make a good wife, and you see, then, when Luke goes to the

Legislature, we'll all move over to Denver, and settle down jist as happy and contented, old woman" (putting his arm around her waist as he spoke), "as we was when we was young and took on with each other."

Mrs. Bosler received the announcement at first with surprise, for she exclaimed, "O Jim!" without being able, apparently, to say another word. Then her astonishment was succeeded by grief, for she began to sob and to cover her face with her hands, and she said, "You know, Jim, as Lal can't bear him!" at the same time wiping her eyes with an apron which, to judge from its appearance, had been used to sop up liquids quite different from tears.

"Well, in course I knows what she says, but gals don't know thar own minds. Why, she ain't seen him half a dozen times in all her life."

"But he's so ugly, Jim! Why, his face is all battered up, so as you'd scarcely think he was a man."

"Well, he ain't much for good looks, that's a fact; but, for the matter o' that, I ain't neither. Jist look at me, now!"

"She'll never do it, Jim," replied Mrs. Bosler, without turning her eyes on her husband's face, and still wiping them with her apron. "I do believe it will kill her."

"Kill her!" exclaimed Mr. Bosler, contemptuously; "no, it won't neither. She ain't sich a fool, and ef she was, I wouldn't let her. She's got to do it Saturday week, and no mistake, at three o'clock in the afternoon. And I want you jist to git ready without sayin' a word to her; mind now, not a word!" he continued, in a threatening tone. "It's got to be, and she's got to make the best of it. And she won't know nothin' about it," chuckling with delight as he spoke, "till Luke and the squire's in the house. And as to good looks, he's got two eyes and a whole nose anyhow, and that's mor'n you kin say for me."

"She'll never stand it, Jim; I knows she won't," cried

Mrs. Bosler, wringing her hands and sobbing violently. "She hates him worse'n pizen; and it don't seem right to make her marry a man as she can't bear even to look on."

"Now, Moll Bosler, don't you be sich a darned fool as to put notions into her head, for, dang me, ef I'll stand any sich stuff! She's got to marry Luke Kittle next Saturday week jist as sure as I'm sittin' on this bar'l! I ain't goin' to stand it, and I want you to know it. It's one of them things as is settled. Ef it ain't, you may call me a liar, and, when I says that, you knows by this time that I means it."

"O Jim, Jim, it'll kill her, I knows!" exclaimed Mrs. Bosler, still sobbing; "and," she added, clasping her hands together and looking imploringly into his face, "it'll kill me, too!"

"Well!" said Bosler, ramming both hands into his trousers-pockets, coming up to where his wife sat and looking down on her with a mingled expression of contempt and anger, while his one eye twitched and worked convulsively in its orbit—"ef you want to be sich a fool as to die, why you can go and do it jist as soon as you pleases, but I can't afford to let Lal go yit, and, what's more, I don't mean to. And I want you to understand that you've got to see this thing through with me; and, ef you don't," seizing her by the shoulders as he spoke, "I'll do what I've never done before—though, perhaps, it would 'a' bin better ef I had—I'll beat you black and blue, as sure as my name's Bosler! Now, stop that darned sniveling, and git up, and see to things, and, mind you, don't you dar' to say a word to Lal till I tell you. Now, I guess we understands each other, and thar won't be no trouble."

"It'll kill her, Jim, jist as sure as you stand thar. Yes," she continued, speaking as she used to speak before her marriage, "I know she will die if you force her to marry that man. It's a cruel thing to do. You know he's a brute, and a vile, bad man, and—"

"Now see here!" exclaimed her husband, grasping her by the wrist, "don't you know you've got to stop this? Do you want me to break your arm?" he continued, giving that member a sudden twist that caused Mrs. Bosler to utter a smothered cry. "You don't, eh! Well, I will ef you says another word, or snivels another snivel. Now go!" giving her a push as he spoke, "and mind what I told you, or thar'll be trouble all around."

During the whole day and for several days thereafter Mrs. Bosler went about the house attending to her work in a dazed sort of a way, as though she scarcely understood what she was doing. She rarely spoke a word even to Lal, and indeed avoided her as much as she could, for she felt afraid that the condition of her mind might be perceived, and that questions might be put to her that she would find it difficult to parry, without her daughter's quick perceptions discovering that something was wrong. She felt in bodily terror of her husband. She had never been treated quite so roughly before. Occasionally he had, when angry, threatened her with various whimsical penalties, such as "bustin' her liver," "knockin' both eyes into one," "mashin' her jaw," and others of the like, but then he had always been in a state of partial intoxication, and she knew that they were either mere idle talk or else only emphatic expressions intended as re-enforcements of his opinions or commands. But now she was convinced that he was in earnest. His eye had gleamed and twinkled as she had never before seen it affected, except upon an occasion several years previously, when he had shot and killed a man in her presence, during a heated discussion in relation to the division of a number of horses of which they had jointly but illegally become possessed. There was an ugly look in his face when he seized her by the arm, that had frightened her and which was constantly before her eyes as she went listlessly through her routine of work, trying to take an interest in the labors

that her position imposed upon her, and yet conscious that her preoccupation was noticed by the one person from whom she felt it must be concealed. She knew enough of her husband to be aware, from the earnestness and positiveness he had shown in the matter, that some more than usually powerful cause had changed his opinions of "The Gulcher," and brought him to his present state of mind in regard to the marriage of his daughter to that individual; but even she never associated these events with the five thousand dollars in gold contained in a bag that had evidently once been Mr. Kittle's property. There was clearly no reason why she should do so. She knew nothing of Lal's prospects as an heiress, and of the fact being known to Luke Kittle, while her husband had no information on the subject. Nothing, therefore, could have been more improbable than that the man would give five thousand dollars for her daughter, and that the girl's own father would sell her for that sum. And yet that there had been some arrangement, and that her husband had profited or was to profit by the contemplated marriage, she was certain.

In the mean time Mr. Bosler continued to drink heavily, though never quite to the extent of producing complete intoxication. He had gotten over the fit of temper he had experienced at his wife's obstinacy in taking an unfavorable view of his matrimonial designs in regard to his daughter. At times, he was jovial with both the women of his household, though he did not fail to notice his wife's dejected manner, and to give her numerous warnings of his vigilance and determination in the shape of savage looks from his one eye and significant shakes of his head. Once when he had caught her behind the house crying and wringing her hands he had spoken a few sharp words of remonstrance, which he had enforced by pinching her arm till it was black and blue. "You want me to break your

arm now, don't you?" he had said, savagely, as he squeezed the flesh till his nails penetrated the skin, while he gave the limb a sudden jerk that almost dislocated her shoulder. "That's only a taste of what you'll git ef you don't mind!" Then changing his manner, he added:

"Don't you go on about it so, Moll. It's got to be, and you mought jist as well take it quietly. I didn't mean to hurt you," he continued, as the woman writhed with the pain he had caused. "Now let's make up," kissing her as he spoke. "Sometimes, Moll, I'm a rough cuss, I knows; but I guess my heart's in the right place, after all, and you knows it, Moll, don't you?"

"O Jim, ef you'd only give this thing up! It's not too late. O Jim for my sake, for me, give it up!"

"Now, thar you are ag'in, goin' on in the old way, and all because I'm a-gittin' a good husband for my daughter. Women is the most onreasonable people in the world, and I've got one on 'em here in this very house as beats all the rest. See here," he continued, as though moved by a sudden inspiration, "I've a darned good mind to tell you the whole thing, and then may be you'll see as I ain't sich a fool as you takes me to be. Luke loves that gal all-fired much. He jist thinks thar ain't no such gal nowhar around, and he's a risin' man, too, is Luke. Well, now, what would you say ef I was to tell you that he give me five thousand dollars in gold—the same as is in that bag as I put away for safe keepin'—and that when Lal's his wife he's to give five thousand more! What would you say to that, Moll? Wouldn't that make you feel proud as you had a daughter as was worth ten thousand dollars cash down?"

"My God, Jim! is that true?"

"True! every word on it—jist as true as gospil. Now you see it ain't so bad as you thought it was. But don't you go and tell Lal till I give the word," he went on, not noticing his wife's changed expression, "for I don't want no

more rows nor I kin help. One woman at a time's about as much as I kin manage, I guess. Why, hello, Moll! What's the matter?—Here, Lal! Lal! come here quick! thar's something wrong, I guess."

Evidently there was something very wrong, for Mrs. Bosler was leaning against the cabin as pale as a ghost, while a crimson torrent of blood was gushing from her mouth. She sank to the ground in her husband's arms, and Lal and he carried her into the house and laid her on the bed, the blood all the while continuing to flow. She did not appear to recognize either of them. She never spoke a word, and in a few moments, after half a dozen deep gasps for breath, each one of which increased the flow of blood, she was dead.

This was Mr. Bosler's twelfth victim since he had taken up his residence in Colorado. For he was just as much morally guilty of her death as though a bullet from his revolver had caused the bleeding from her lungs.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"LAL MUST GO!"

MRS. BOSLER'S death occurred on Saturday, and there was still a whole week before the time fixed for Lal's wedding. For a few moments Jim stood by the side of the bed on which the corpse of his wife lay, the subject of several contending emotions. He had loved the woman after his manner, and more than he had loved any other human being, except perhaps his daughter. If his ways with other people were taken into consideration, it would in common justice have to be admitted that as a rule he had treated her well; better, probably, than men of his kind generally treat their wives. But, for all that, he had been a brute, and had, through her weakness and his own persistently evil example and precept, brought her down almost to his own level. Now she was dead, and as he stood looking at the body from which the life-blood had flowed till death had come, and brushed away with his shirt-sleeve the single tear that rose to his single eye, he felt sorry that she was gone.

But the predominant feeling, or at least the one that soon became predominant, was connected with the disposition that he had made of his daughter; and it was a fear that, in some way or other, the catastrophe might interfere with the contemplated fulfillment of his obligations to Mr. Kittle, and the consequent receipt from that gentleman of the further sum of five thousand dollars, to say nothing of being called upon to return the amount he had already received. Thoughts of this kind obtruded themselves upon

Mr. Bosler in the midst of his grief, and eventually succeeded in banishing that emotion altogether. So far, however, as he was concerned, he was determined that there should be no postponement of the ceremony. Indeed, as he argued with himself, there was all the more reason, now that Lal was motherless, that she should have the protecting arms of a husband thrown around her. He was conscious of his own inability to look after his various interests, and at the same time be a companion to her. "Lal's one o' them gals," he said to himself as she lay across the bed, her head buried in her dead mother's bosom, "as must have society, and it's my dooty to git the best for her as I kin. I guess now she'll feel kind o' lonely, and won't be so keen to kick over the traces as she mought 'a' bin. All things is for the best, I guess," he added, resignedly, addressing his daughter, "though it's hard sometimes to take it all in at onst. I shouldn't wonder ef she was better off now than she would 'a' bin ef she'd a staid with us." Which, admitting, as Mr. Bosler did, the existence of a future state, was about as true a remark as had ever fallen from his lips. "Come, Lal," he continued to his daughter, who was sobbing as though her heart would break, "don't you cry any mor'n you kin help. In course you feels bad, and I don't objeck to your cryin'. What you've got to do now is, to do them things as she and me'd agreed was best for you. Her heart was jist sot on one thing, and when you do that she'll know it even ef she is dead, and she'll be glad, I guess, as she left a good daughter behind her."

Lal did not hear half of what he said; and if she had heard, she could not, in her then condition of overwhelming grief, have given it attention. She therefore made no reply, either to Mr. Bosler's pious platitudes or to the reference he had made to her mother's wishes.

The brilliant idea of giving Lal to understand that her mother had specially desired that the marriage with Luke

Kittle should take place had only occurred to Mr. Bosler while he was making his remarks at the bedside of his dead wife, and had at once been acted upon. The reference was indistinct, but it was enough, under the circumstances, when he could not be expected to go into details; and it would serve as the basis for more specific allegations as to the dead woman's wishes, to be stated at a subsequent period. Now, arrangements had to be made for the funeral. So Mr. Bosler, leaving Lal alone in charge of the corpse, hitched up his horses and started for The Cañon, to procure the services of an undertaker and a clergyman.

It was not his intention to stay long at the town. His friend Crump would, he thought, attend to matters for him; and, having once engaged his services, he designed returning immediately to Bighorn Spring. He had an indistinct idea that it would not be seemly for him to appear prominently in public while his wife lay a corpse in his house. And in some matters Mr. Bosler was very particular.

He saw Crump, and, what was more, saw "The Gulcher," and found them both fully as sympathetic as he could have desired. It was agreed that no postponement of the proposed wedding should take place, but that punctually at three o'clock, on the following Saturday afternoon, Mr. Kittle, the justice of the peace, and such friends as he desired to invite to the ceremony, should make their appearance at Bighorn Spring, and that there and then Lal should become his wife.

The funeral of Mrs. Bosler, it was arranged, should be conducted quietly the following morning, the grave being dug in the cemetery belonging to the town. That evening the body was brought to The Cañon and laid out in a private room at "Crump's," and the next day, followed only by Mr. Bosler, Lal, Messrs. Kittle and Crump, and two or three women-friends of the deceased, it was deposited in its

final resting-place. There was no formal inquiry as to the cause of death. A physician asked a few questions of Lal and her father, looked at the corpse, from the mouth of which the blood was still oozing when it arrived at The Cañon, and then gave a certificate of "death from pulmonary hæmorrhage."

Mr. Bosler and Lal, as soon as the funeral was over, drove back to Bighorn Spring. Although she had no knowledge of the altercation that had been the immediate cause of her mother's death, she was aware, from various preceding circumstances, that a difference of opinion on some important subject existed between them. She had several times surprised her mother in tears, and, upon inquiring, had received evasive answers. She had observed, too, that her father and mother rarely talked to each other as they had formerly done, and that, although he was apparently in good spirits, these were certainly not shared by his wife. And, in addition, she had repeatedly seen her father look threateningly at her mother, and had perceived that the latter quailed under the infliction. All these things now came back to Lal with increased force, and the efforts that Mr. Bosler made to lead her to believe that never before had he been so loving to his wife as during the last few days, only served to increase the doubts that were being developed in her mind.

Few words were spoken during the drive home. Mr. Bosler once or twice made some indifferent remark, to which Lal either gave a short answer or none at all, as the occasion required. She had not yet gotten over the first burst of grief, and the state of mental torpor into which her mother's sudden and awful death had thrown her. As well as she could, she was thinking of all the incidents that had any apparent connection with the event. Then she recollected that her mother had gone to the back of the house, whither she had been followed by her father. She

knew of nothing more till she heard him call for asssistance, and, on hurrying from the work on which she was engaged, finding her mother sinking to the ground with the blood gushing from her mouth.

But yet, though she knew so little, she instinctively felt that he, in some way or other, was connected with her mother's death, and the thought gave her a terror and a repugnance that, with all her efforts, she could not overcome. That there had been no murder she believed, for she had seen with her own eyes the crimson current that welled up from her mother's breast like water from the bottom of a spring. And she had also witnessed the dismay and sorrow of her father, when, in the height of the catastrophe, he had supported his dying wife in his arms, and, after his rough method, had soothed her last moments. But what had caused the blood to flow, and what were they doing there together? Ah! that she did not know—might, perhaps, never know. Mrs. Bosler had not been ill; there had been no cough, no sign of lung-disease; the doctor who gave the death-certificate had said that some sudden excitement might have caused the breaking of the blood-vessel. What had been the cause of that excitement? Something her father had said or done? Something to produce a climax to the mental disturbance that her mother had suffered ever since her father had returned from The Cañon?

With this imperfect conclusion, unsatisfactory as it was, Lal was obliged for the present to be content. Her mother was dead! From that fact there was no escape. Her best friend, the only one to whom she had been able to go in her troubles, would never more be able to help her with the sympathy that had so often confirmed her in the right. She called to mind how, only a few days before, her mother had strengthened her in her determination to return the stolen book, and she recognized the fact that but for the

support she had given, the book might still have been stolen property. She did not stop to consider that her mother had done but a small portion of her duty; she did not think of the toleration of crime, the neglect of both precept and example, the weakness toward her husband's outrages, the degradation of her own nature, that the woman had exhibited. That woman was her mother; and Lal only thought of the good parts of her disposition and character, especially as they had been exhibited during the last few days of her life. It had seemed that Mrs. Bosler had been suddenly awakened to the sense of her short-comings, when she had revealed her heart to her daughter, scarcely a week before she was placed beyond the possibility of making further progress toward a reformation. Lal thought of her most as she had lived last.

Arriving at Bighorn Spring, Mr. Bosler went at once to his own room, and, shutting the door, proceeded to make himself comfortable by taking off his coat, boots, and cravat. Then, from a recess that he had constructed behind the fireplace, he took his bag of five thousand dollars and began to count the bright gold-pieces. Five hundred there ought to be, and five hundred there were, of ten dollars each. Ten piles of fifty, or fifty piles of ten, or five piles of a hundred—all kinds of numerical combinations could be made of them; but he thought they looked best when spread out over the table singly, in the form of a parallelogram, counting twenty-five one way and twenty the other. He sat and looked at this figure, his eye twinkling with pleasure at the sight of the golden sheet and with the ideas that were evoked. In another week he would be able to make it twice as big—or to have two, one at each end of the table. He rubbed his hands with glee as his imagination pictured the augmentation of his wealth. And all obtained so easily! No risk of losing his life, as in horse-stealing! He actually began to see that the latter was not

entirely an advantageous way of seeking a living. There were objections to it. He was now a capitalist, and, like others before him, with their attainment of wealth, he was becoming conservative. He was almost ready to kick down the ladder that he had been climbing so many years. He might even stop drinking whisky. He only wished he had a dozen daughters. He would be perfectly willing to sell them all for ten thousand dollars apiece.

But he *did* love this one, and he *did* feel a pang or two of regret that he should have to give her up in a week from that time, and to a man who, however much he might try to deceive himself into the idea that he was worthy, he knew in his heart was a beastly wretch, with scarcely a redeeming quality, and this, even from his stand-point, which was not an elevated one by any means.

Yes; he must part with Lal, and for ten thousand dollars. There was compensation in the thought, but yet he felt uneasy. For a moment or two he imagined to himself a wild scheme, by which it might be possible to get all the money and keep his daughter too. Kittle would doubtless bring the money with him. Why not pick a quarrel with him, kill him, possess himself of the bag of gold he would have with him, and then with Lal make his escape? No; it would not do. There would be the justice of the peace; and, doubtless, "The Gulcher" would not be such a fool as to put his head into Mr. Bosler's trap without having thoroughly provided for his escape. He would come with his friends all armed to the teeth, ready for, and perhaps even expecting, treachery. Mr. Bosler knew that his reputation was not good, even with his own class.

There was one other alternative; and that was to escape from the country immediately, taking his daughter with him, and being satisfied with the five thousand dollars he had already received. But a very little reflection sufficed to dismiss this idea from his mind—the five thousand dol-

lars in expectancy constituted an allurement that he was absolutely powerless to resist. Besides, he had reason to believe that any effort at escape would be futile. "The Gulcher" was sharp; he knew the man he was dealing with; and he would not have risked his five thousand dollars without having provided ample guarantees for security, Doubtless, there were spies watching every movement he made; doubtless, they were at that very moment around the house, ready to intercept any attempt at flight that he might make. No; there was no alternative—the bargain must be fulfilled. Lal must go!

There was one thing yet to do, and that was to communicate to his daughter the information of the fate that was in store for her. It was to Mr. Bosler's credit that he shrank from doing this, and there were two reasons that caused him to view the act of revelation with apprehension. In the first place, he knew she would be distressed; and, in the second, he was eqally certain she would be angry. He loved her a little too much to be willing to cause her a pang if he could have seen his way out of the matter, and he stood in some terror of Lal's anger. He did not know what it might result in. He had several times provoked her to great indignation by merely mentioning Mr. Kittle to her as a possible husband, and he had been fearful from her appearance and actions that she might be going to have a fit, or to become insane, or to plunge a knife into her breast or perhaps into his; and all this had been brought about merely by the suggestion that a man she loathed might some day be her husband. What would she do when told that she *should* be this man's wife, that it was all settled, and that the day was only a week distant? He positively trembled when he thought of it, and he determined that the contest, if it needs must be severe, should be a short one, and that therefore he would say nothing to her on the subject till the night before the wedding was to occur.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A RENEWED ACQUAINTANCESHIP.

THE election that was to take place in the Fourth Legislative Council District was a special one, for the purpose of filling the vacancy occasioned by the lamented demise of Councilor Thomas Hughson, who had been accidentally drowned while attempting to cross Bobtail River on horseback. The next day after Tyscovus's nomination, Doctor Willis came down to the butte to confer with the candidate relative to the best means of obtaining success. The doctor's knowledge of the country and of the people was of great service to Tyscovus, and, after an hour's conversation with his friend, he obtained a very clear idea of the condition of affairs and of the measures to be taken to insure reform.

It was arranged that Tyscovus should make a series of speeches in various parts of the district, beginning at Hellbender and ending with The Cañon. The latter place was well known to be devoted to the interests of Mr. Luke Kittle, the rival candidate; and the doctor, knowing the character of the majority of the inhabitants, was at first disposed to omit it from the list, under the idea that violence might be offered to any one opposing their favorite; but to this Tyscovus would not consent. He intended, he said, to be fully as outspoken to the citizens of that place as to those of any other locality, and hoped to be able to convince some of them that it would better to have an honest administra-

tion of the laws than such a disregard of the principles of order as then existed, and that must end ere long in a state of complete anarchy.

For a while, the doctor endeavored to dissuade him from persisting in this part of his plan of operations, but eventually gave in his adhesion, though not without expressing his fears that some offensive act might be committed. "It would be so easy," he said, "for any rascal who might take umbrage at your remarks, to shoot at you from the crowd listening to your speech, and none of us would ever know from whom the shot came! However, we will try to be on our guard against any such surprises; and an idea strikes me in this connection which, if we can carry it out, will afford you complete protection, besides, probably, enabling you to get a majority at The Cañon. Don't ask me now what it is. I shall at once attend to it, and you will probably know in a few hours."

Tyscovus had already arranged to have funds placed to his credit in the "Miners' National Bank," at Hellbender, and the doctor engaged to purchase for him a pair of horses and a light wagon which he would require in making his campaign. Then the doctor took his departure for The Cañon, promising to stop on his way back to report the result relative to his idea, and to drive Tyscovus over to Chetolah for a couple of days' visit, so as to give him a better opportunity of consulting with his political friends; and also that he might at once secure his naturalization papers.

It was not without a full appreciation of the importance of the step he was taking, that Tyscovus contemplated the act of renouncing his allegiance to all other potentates, and especially to the Emperor of Russia. The change of nationality must always to a thoughtful man be a matter of grave importance. But, as the reader knows, he was through his mother well imbued with American ideas. He had at various periods made long visits to the United States, and had,

several years previously, declared his intention to become an American citizen. He had also, as part of the course of study requisite for the composition of the book in which he had been engaged, devoted a good deal of time to the investigation of the American political system. He knew all the provisions of the Constitution, better than do the majority of educated adult Americans; and he had admired without stint the admirable checks and guarantees contained in that wonderful instrument.

As the reader already knows, Tyscovus had fully thought out the matter of his candidacy in all its relations, and had decided to give up, or at any rate postpone, further work at his book. The opportunity afforded him for being of practical benefit to humanity was too excellent to be disregarded. Should he be unsuccessful in his contest, the loss of time would not be great, as the election was to take place in about two weeks, and his numerous journeys around the country, necessary to the conduction of his political campaign, would at least serve to enlarge his knowledge relative to the interesting people among whom his fortunes would be cast for several years.

The prospect of again meeting Theodora was pleasant to him, and, although it was probable that most of his time would be taken up with other matters, he anticipated being more or less in her society during his stay at Chetolah. He began to long for such refined woman-companionship as she was capable of affording. He had felt the charm of her presence very acutely, and now that he had, as he thought, arrived at the decision that marriage with a woman of her tastes and predilections was out of the question, he had lost the fear of association with her with which he had at first been imbued. She was a woman to have as a friend, and he was quite sure that, were he to be in constant companionship with her, he should never regard her in any other light than as a friend.

In the course of the afternoon Doctor Willis returned, and, to the surprise of Tyscovus, brought with him the man Abe Wilkins, or "The Monkey," who only a few days before had made a strenuous effort to enter his house. Tyscovus looked at him with astonishment, contemplating the extraordinary appearance presented by the man's long arms, and wondering how he had been able to resist the embrace which they seemed to be capable of giving. On the other hand, "The Monkey" regarded his late antagonist with equal wonder, that a man so spare as Tyscovus appeared to be should have been able, not only to resist him, but to have shown himself an aggressive combatant not to be despised.

"Now that you have inspected each other sufficiently," said the doctor, laughing, "I must explain the object I had in view in bringing about this meeting. I was quite sure of Wilkins's good-will toward you," he continued, addressing Tyscovus, "and I am now convinced of his earnest desire to reform, and to atone, so far as he can, for his former lawless career. The narrow escape of his child from death the other day has been of service to him, by setting him to thinking that he had neglected his duty as a father, and causing him to resolve to do better in future. In the first place, he desires to ask your forgiveness."

"That's about it, I guess," said Wilkins, "I'm goin' to quit, and I'd like to start squar'."

"I am perfectly willing to forgive you," said Tyscovus, "especially as you have made restitution, but you have broken the law, and, although I shall take no active measures for your punishment, I can not insure you against arrest, or promise that I will not appear as a witness against you."

"Oh, as to that," said Wilkins, laughing, "I'll take my chances. Thar ain't no one, I guess, would keer to take me up, so long as you're satisfied. Besides, thar ain't

no one as knows anything about it 'cept you and the doctor."

"It looks to me something like compounding a felony," said Tyscovus, gravely. Then suddenly it occurred to him that he had already, in the case of Lal Bosler, done that very thing. She had violated the law, not to the same extent as the man before him, but still had committed a distinct infraction of the statute against larceny. She had expressed contrition and had made restitution, and he had not only forgiven her, but had fallen in love with her. Wilkins had expressed contrition—had also made restitution; why, then, should he not compound his felony as readily as he had Lal Bosler's? Many hyper-conscientious people would have worried themselves into a morbid state of mind over this question. Tyscovus, however, saw the matter in its true light. Setting aside altogther his personal feelings, he recognized the facts that the objects of all law are the protection of society and the reformation of the criminal. The first end he knew was to be obtained, not only by putting the offender in such a position as regarded the world that further crime would be impossible—that is, shutting him up in prison, or taking his life, according to the nature of his crime—but by acting upon him morally, and by using him as an example to others who might be contemplating violations of the law. Lal's offense was not a public one; it was the result of impulse, and was not one of a series committed by a hardened criminal, habituated to crime. No court would have inflicted upon her much more than a nominal punishment. Moreover, she had expiated her offense by her humiliation and grief.

As to Wilkins, he was an old offender; he exhibited no evidence of contrition beyond his own assertion; he had come there purposely to commit crime; he had used violence; he was known throughout the Territory as a lawless man; his punishment would serve as a much-needed ex-

ample, and would effectually provide against the perpetration by him of further crimes.

Yes, there was a difference. It was not necessary for him to go further into the consideration of the subject. It was right to condone Lal's venial sin and crime, and it would not be right to prevent the law dealing with Mr. Abe Wilkins—certainly not till there were better evidences of that individual's reformation than had been yet offered. He was not going to denounce him, and neither was he going to protect him. His future action would depend very much on how the neophyte in virtue conducted himself.

"So it is compounding a felony," said the doctor, taking up Tyscovus's last remark, and walking with him out of the room. "That means, that you are willing to say nothing about the matter provided the offender does certain things. Every father, I suppose, acts in that way with his children, and he would be a very bad father if he did not. And even courts suspend punishment in such cases as they think can be dealt with mercifully to the advantage of the guilty person and of society. Now, I know Wilkins pretty well. I believe he means to be a different and a better man hereafter. He has told me something to-day that has stirred every fiber of my body, and I advise you to trust him absolutely. By so doing, you will confirm him in his good resolutions and benefit your country."

"I don't think I quite understand," said Tyscovus.

"Of course you don't; you are not likely to suspect me of conceiving such a brilliant stroke of genius as I have not only thought out, but executed. We shall carry The Cañon for you by at least a hundred majority."

"I still don't understand."

"No, for I have not yet explained. Now. listen: Abe Wilkins controls a large portion of the votes of The Cañon. The other side has relied on him to influence this

vote for Kittle. He will not. He will work in your interest, and every mother's son of the gang will go for you."

"And what am I to do? I must confess that at first sight I don't quite like the idea of votes in a free country being transferred, without regard to principles, from one party to the other. I suppose something will be required of me."

"You will not be required to pay money, or to sacrifice principle, or to do anything, worthy or unworthy, in regard to these men. You will go down there and speak, and you will tell them that you are a law-and-order man, and that your very first duty, if you are elected, will be to introduce measures looking to a reform in the system of administering law. You will say as severe things as you please and these men will applaud you, and then they will vote for you. Surely it is desirable to win these people over to the side of right, and it is proper for you to avail yourself of the assistance of the only man who can control them."

"And what inducements will Wilkins hold out to them?"

"None at all, except that of voting to oblige him. He controls them by his own personal influence. They will go as he goes, and he is now on your side. They neither know nor care anything about the principles involved."

"And yet they have the privileges of freemen! I think it is very horrible."

"My dear fellow, there are ignorant men in every community who are just as unworthy as they are of the rights of the citizen. But what can you do? They have votes that they do not know how to use. Somebody must guide them. Now, who shall it be, you or Mr. Luke Kittle? If you do not accept the leadership, your opponent will, and he will be elected."

"Of course, Wilkins expects something," said Tyscovus, still unsatisfied. "What is it? An office?"

"By no means. He is actuated solely by good-will to you, originating, I suspect, in a wholesome admiration for your prowess. Besides, he feels that he has done you an injury, and he wishes to atone for it, and as amply as is in his power."

"I will accept his proposition," said Tyscovus after a little reflection, "upon the condition that I have an opportunity of addressing his 'gang,' as you call it, informing them of my principles, and calling their attention to the fact that their votes are their own, and not to be cast for me unless they are satisfied that I am the better man and will make the better legislator."

"I think you are over-sensitive," said the doctor, laughing; "but I will engage that you shall have the opportunity you desire. Now, I am going to propose to you to leave Wilkins in charge of your house while you are with us at Chetolah. It is not safe to leave it unguarded, as you have now many valuable things in it."

"Well, of all the extraordinary propositions I ever heard," said Tyscovus, with an amused expression of countenance, "that exceeds!" To think of employing as a keeper of a house the man who robbed it, is certainly a most original idea, and one that only the brain of an American could have evolved. However, I am willing. Such an experience of human nature as you are giving me will be very valuable, especially if on my return I do not find that he has again made off with all of my effects that he could carry."

"And that is exactly the experience you will have. You will find that not a thing will have been touched without your permission. Come, let us go back and settle matters with him at once. Then I shall drive you over to Chetolah. Theodora is waiting to welcome you. Her experiment in evolution is a perfect success, and she is about devising others in which she wants your advice. She is de-

lighted with your nomination. I have been trying to induce her to make a speech or two in your behalf, but she pleads other and more imperative duties. Besides, she is expecting visitors from New York in a few days—some people whom she met last summer and whom she likes very much, and who are coming at a most opportune moment."

"I shall be delighted to meet Miss Willis again," said Tyscovus, with animation; "I would much rather converse with her than make political speeches."

"Of course, you would!" exclaimed the doctor, with entire sincerity. "Who wouldn't? She's capable of entertaining the wisest man that ever lived."

"Well, I'm not that," said Tyscovus, laughing; "I'm only an ass, as you know. But, for all that, I have a humble liking for being entertained. I suppose 'John Buridan's Ass' was delectably enlivened when he found himself between the water and the hay."

"I don't know about that," said the doctor; "the occasion was too serious for much amusement.—Now, Wilkins," he continued as they entered the room where that individual was seated waiting their return, "all is settled, and Mr. Tyscovus will be glad to have you remain in charge of his house till he gets back, which he will in a couple of days. I told him he could trust you."

"So he kin, doc; I guess all'll be safe with me, and, what's more, I won't let no one else touch 'em neither. Now, ef thar's any instructions, I'm ready for 'em."

"I have no instructions," said Tyscovus, to whom the latter part of the remarks had been addressed; "I leave all to you, simply to be taken care of."

"And I'll take care of 'em, that you kin bet your pile on."

Then Tyscovus filled a traveling-bag with what he thought he should require, and he and the doctor took their departure for Chetolah.

During the drive, the doctor scarcely opened his mouth to speak, except occasionally to utter some exclamation brought out apparently by the thoughts passing through his mind. Tyscovus saw that he was preoccupied, and forbore to interrupt the current of his ideas. But, as they were entering the house, the doctor said :

"I've heard something to-day which will, if true—and I do not see how it can be false—require some prompt work, and will make several people happy. I can not speak more fully at present, not even to Theodora, but a few days will reveal all. It settles all the doubts of many years. But come in—I must not keep you standing in the cold while your tea is waiting for you."

CHAPTER XXV.

"THAT LESSON IS FOR YOU!"

TYSCOVUS was glad to meet Theodora again, and Theodora was equally delighted to encounter Tyscovus. The mere sight of her was sufficient to recall in him all the emotions of pleasure that he had experienced on first seeing her, and that had grown so long as the personal association had continued. But he had resolved not to allow his feelings to become involved beyond the point of friendship based on admiration and esteem, and, as Theodora evidently regarded him in a similar light, there was at first entire ease in their conversation and manner with each other.

But Tyscovus was so constituted that self-control in the matter of his emotions was a very difficult matter. He had at one time, before leaving Poland, and even for a short period after his arrival in Colorado, succeeded in mastering these troublesome mental faculties to such a degree that he began to flatter himself that he had at last acquired complete command over them. He had then been subjected to the severest system of self-discipline that he had ever employed against himself, and his efforts had, as he thought, resulted in a victory for his intellect; but he had latterly been forced to admit that the superiority was by no means absolute. Still, there was less brusqueness in the manifestation of his feelings always; there was a greater power of repression, and some were entirely restrained. He reasoned more forcibly and logically in regard to them, his faculty of

introspection was markedly developed, he had acquired increased power of considering his desires from unselfish stand-points, and of deciding irrespectively of his likes and dislikes; courageous to a fault, he was not afraid of himself. He shirked no responsibility. He did not wish to fall in love with Theodora. His reason told him, whether rightly or wrongly, that she could not be such a wife as he would desire. He might easily have avoided all risk of losing his heart by keeping away from Chetolah, but association with her was delightful, and to have avoided her would have been unkind and cowardly.

Now, as he sat in the luxuriously furnished drawing-room, on one side of the comfortable wood-fire, while Theodora, looking to his eyes more beautiful than ever before, sat on the other, he began to wonder how it had ever been possible for him to think of her as a woman to whom marriage should be forbidden. She was telling him of some recent novels she had been reading. Her interest was aroused and her cheeks glowed with the soft mellow hue which the peach wears when the summer sun begins to ripen it. Her remarks revealed her capacity to analyze characters and motives, and were couched in a diction that showed how thoroughly she had mastered the principles of the English language and how perfect was her taste in the choice of words.

Tyscovus looked at her with undisguised admiration. There was nothing of the female anatomist about her now. No one seeing her beautifully formed hands with their tapering fingers would have supposed that they had ever held such a thing as a scalpel, or had dabbled in the unpleasant ooze of post-mortem examinations. She looked and spoke like a veritable woman without masculine aspirations or masculine modes of thought. Like one who, finding her greatest happiness in the study of the beautiful in Nature and in Art, preferred their refining influences to those to be

derived from a public career, or from sitting on scholastic benches with "Tom, Dick, and Harry."

She was speaking of the heroine in a somewhat popular novel of the day.

"I do not like her," she said with decision, and with a pretty little gesture of the hands. "She is hard, and such women are always undesirable acquaintances, whether I meet them in real life or in fiction. Sorrows and misfortunes, instead of refining her and making her more gentle, served, on the contrary, to array her only the more strongly, not only against those about her, but against the whole human race. An author has no right to make such a character the central figure of his story. Of course, disagreeable, and even mean, base, vile personages, may be properly introduced into novels; but they should never be made the heroes or heroines. No properly constituted person ever cares, from choice, to read the lives of real malefactors or other abominable people, or of those who are constantly exhibiting unworthy traits of disposition or character. Why, then, should such creatures be imagined by the novelist, and a halo of glory be thrown around them, by making them the chief figures of his story?

"The novel should, of course, depict life, and I am not so squeamish as to exclude all ignoble natures; but these should always be subordinate to those better types of humanity of which the world is full, and which, when well conceived and described, always give pleasure as well as instruction to the reader."

"I am not quite sure that you are altogether right," said Tyscovus. "It appears to me that we can not avoid meeting with wickedness in this world, and that novels that assume to depict the manners, customs, passions of mankind, can not ignore the bad. A great part of the goodness of the world comes from a knowledge of the evils attendant on the pursuit of vice. The Spartans were observ-

ant people, and well informed in regard to the working of the human mind. As you know, they made their slaves drunk, and then submitted them to the observation of their children, in order to show them the disgusting effects of drunkenness. It was an immoral and beastly experiment. It was doing positive evil in order to obtain a possible good; but, doubtless, it was instructive. I don't see why the novelist should not also make us acquainted with the horrors of a vicious life provided he is careful not to glaze them over with the thin varnish of decency or of beauty, but allows them to stand out in all their naked deformity and ugliness. I can even conceive that he might imagine a totally depraved character and make him the principal personage of his story, but then he should be very sure that he presents him in such a way as to leave no doubt in the minds of his readers as to what he himself thinks of the moral status of his hero. There should be no extenuation of his crimes or sins, and his wickedness should meet with its due reward."

"Then you think the novel should inculcate a lesson?" said Theodora, inquiringly.

"Of course I do; but at the same time I regard the discussions that are constantly taking place, relative to the functions of the fictionist, as in great part superfluous, for I can not conceive of any well-told story failing to teach a lesson of some kind. I think the moral should not be obtrusive. If it is, the character of the story as a work of art is impaired. Something should be left for the imagination of the reader, but, for all that, it should be there, and not so hidden, either, that the wayfaring man, though he be almost a fool, should have any difficulty in finding it."

Theodora smiled at the earnestness which Tyscovus exhibited, a quality which, however, he manifested at all times in everything he undertook to say or do. It was this that constituted one of the chief charms of the man,

and which impressed the listener or observer with a high sense of his honesty of purpose. Theodora felt the influence which every thorough-going and sincere person exercises upon those with whom he is associated; and yet she was not impressionable in the ordinary sense of the word. She was not one to be led away by an emotion from what her intellect, in her cooler moments, would tell her was right. But her reason was usually in such happy accord with her feelings, and acted so promptly upon the excitations they offered, that no one could have called her cold-hearted, or have regarded her as being slow to respond to any appeal addressed to her heart.

But with her interest in the manner and matter of what Tyscovus had said was mingled no small degree of astonishment, that he, a foreigner, and of a nationality far removed in modes of thought and of expression from her own, should have been able to convey his ideas with such clearness, and without, so far as she could perceive, a single lapse from the highest standard of good English. At his former visit she had, as it were, been the teacher, and he had said little of a character to reveal the type of mental organization he possessed, or the methods by which his mind worked. Now, however, he was, without seeming to have a purpose of so doing, becoming the instructor, and she, equally unconsciously, was listening to the words that fell from his lips as though he spoke with the divine right of an oracle.

And yet she was not annoyed at the change that was taking place, although she saw at once that his was the stronger mind, and that, in any future associations, he would lead and she would follow. It was not so much the ideas he expressed that revealed to her a knowledge of the relative positions they would henceforth occupy, as it was the energy and decision he displayed in their enunciation. She saw that these were masculine qualities that man, by

the very nature of his organization, must possess in a higher degree than they are held by woman, and she admired them accordingly. And not only this, but, with true feminine instinct—an instinct, however, which, like that of maternity, is slowly but surely fading out of the human female organism—she recognized their possessor as one whom she would be content to accept as a guide; whom, in fact, she would be compelled to accept. Like most properly organized women, she felt a contempt for weak-minded or weak-bodied men. She saw that Tyscovus was neither the one nor the other. Her father had told her of some of his antecedents—his imprisonment in Siberia; the object of his visit to America; his contest with Abe Wilkins—and she perceived for herself that there was a vigor of understanding that could not fail to make itself felt whenever an emergency might arise.

"Doubtless you are right so far as society at large is concerned," she said, at last. "My remarks were too general. I should have restricted them to myself. I imagined, for the moment, that what was unpleasant to me must be so to the rest of the world. Besides, if you choose," she added, laughing, "you can set the expression down to my inherent tendency, in common with the rest of my sex, to be inexact. But you spoke, just now, of totally depraved persons. Are there any such?"

"No," replied Tyscovus, laughing in turn, "I do not believe there are. You may set *my* expression down to my national tendency to exaggeration. But I see, Miss Willis, that you know how to give thrusts as well as to parry them. Coming back, though, to totally depraved persons, your father contends that Mr. Jim Bosler is without a redeeming trait. He regards him as being the worst man between the two oceans. Admitting this last allegation to be true, I still believe that he is not altogether bad, that he loves his wife and daughter, and that further acquaintance with

him would reveal the existence of other qualities of a character to redeem him from the charge of total depravity."

"I think your example is about as strong a one as you could have chosen," said Theodora. "Bosler is assuredly as bad a man as there is. There may be others who have committed more crimes, and of a more horrible nature, but he has the capacity for any depth of wickedness into which the heart of man can plunge. It is strange to me that he can have had a daughter as naturally good as Lal. I have always believed in the hereditary transmission of qualities good and bad, but this instance appears to be in opposition to the theory. Do you believe in it?"

"No, I do not," answered Tyscovus, with emphasis, "or rather I should say, in regard to this matter as well as to many others, that I am an agnostic. The evidence is not sufficient either way, and I prefer to hold my belief in abeyance till there are more facts bearing on the question. I have reached that step of mental evolution in which I accept nothing till it is proved."

"There I think you are wrong," said Theodora, with animation. "Agnosticism has always struck me as such a hard, cold condition for the mind to reach. It shows so little confidence in one's self, and leaves no room for future mental development except in the miser-like direction of the continual accumulation of facts."

"I do not think I quite follow you," said Tyscovus, after a moment's reflection.

"I will try and make myself clear. Suppose, for example, a person should ask me whether or not you were a burglar? Do you think I should say, 'I do not know—I have not accumulated a sufficient stock of facts yet in regard to him to enable me to answer the question'? No, I should at once reply that you were not, and I should base my opinion upon certain traits that I know you to possess, and that are also totally incompatible with the existence of a

tendency to enter people's houses by violence. I should have this knowledge as firmly as any other I could acquire."

"No, that I deny; you could have the inference, perhaps; but as to the knowledge, that you could not possess unless you knew more of my former life than you do know. As a matter of fact, my dear Miss Willis," he continued as earnestly as though he were expressing a serious doubt relative to his non-burglarious antecedents, "you do not know whether I am a burglar or not. For all you can allege with certainty, I may have broken into many houses, and have even served out a term in prison for my crimes. You can only know a thing when you have applied to it the powers of your senses. What you can see, hear, taste, smell, or touch, that you know, and nothing else."

"If the senses were infallible," rejoined Theodora, "you might with propriety regard them as the only channels through which sure information is to be obtained. But when you call to mind the fact that they are all liable to lead to illusions and hallucinations, I do not see that we obtain any more certain knowledge through them than through reflection upon such perceptions as seem to us to be real. When we come to actual positive knowledge, about which there is no possibility of a doubt, I think you will agree with me that the amount is exceedingly small. In truth, I am not sure that we have any. If we stopped to act only upon indubitable knowledge, we should do nothing at all. Faith, after all, is the influence that guides us."

"I think I could easily invalidate your reasoning," said Tyscovus, with a smile, "if I were not anxious to talk with you about another matter. Do you know much of Miss Bosler?"

"Not a very great deal; in fact, nothing of my own knowledge. Father knows her well, and has always spoken kindly of her."

"I wish you knew her, for I would like to have your

opinion of her. It is very horrible to think that she has such an irreclaimable wretch as Bosler for her father."

"Yes, but then you know she will probably soon be separated from him, for, as her guardian and the trustee of her fortune, father will never permit her to be surrounded by such influences as those to which she has hitherto been subjected. He will probably send her East in a few days. I suppose you know that her mother is dead."

"No, I had not heard of it. Then the girl is still more to be pitied, for I suppose her mother was some check to the evil power of Bosler."

"A little only; she was a weak creature, and thoroughly under her husband's control. I have heard papa say that at one time she was a very respectable woman, but that association with Bosler soon degraded her almost to his level."

Tyscovus reflected for a few moments as to whether or not he should tell Theodora of Lal's recent visit to him and of its cause. Finally he decided to do so, and in a few words related the essential points of the matter, but without saying much relative to his own feelings or those which he thought he had detected in Lal.

Theodora heard him through to the end without question or comment. When he had concluded, she said: "I see that you understand the great law of kindness. Undoubtedly you have saved her from the commission of further crimes. Of course, you would not under any circumstance have sent her to jail, but you might have spoken harshly to her and thus have hardened her heart. You have done much to start her right on the new career upon which she will soon enter; for, though her offense was slight, and committed ignorantly or thoughtlessly, it was enough to form the basis for much greater crimes.

"I never expect to see her again," said Tyscovus, with a tinge of sadness in his voice.

"You say that regretfully."

"Yes, I do regret it."

"Why?" said Theodora, after a moment's silence, during which she appeared to be thinking whether or not she should put the question.

"Because she interests me greatly. I should like to watch the development of her mind under ennobling influences. I should even like, if possible, to take a part in her education. I can conceive of no greater pleasure. I should like to have her entirely under my own control, and to educate her according to my own ideas. Of course, however, that is out of the question."

"Yes, I think it is."

"May I ask," inquired Tyscovus with a little pique in his tone, "why you express yourself so positively?"

"The reasons are very simple. In the first place, you would injure your own character; in the next place, you would ruin hers."

"I suppose that is all quite true," said Tyscovus, musingly; "the world is very wicked and imagines wrong where there is only right. If I were to take this ignorant girl to my home, with the sole object of making her better than she is, and were to carry out my purpose with entire fidelity, we should both lose whatever reputation for virtue either of us have."

"I am quite sure you would."

"And you would go with the world, Miss Willis?"

"Ah! I didn't say that. No, I should not go with the world. I should as soon think you a burglar in disguise as a disloyal and an untrue man. But how many others would have equal faith in you? To how many others have you revealed yourself as you have unconsciously to me? To society at large, only the fact would be known, and you would be condemned. Besides, the thing itself would I think be, if not wrong, manifestly imprudent. Women

should not be subjected even to the suspicion of evil; and civilization has thrown no more safeguards around them than are sufficient for their protection, not only from sin, but from the appearance of sin. But I am fighting a windmill; for of course you have never conceived a distinct idea of doing anything of the kind."

"But I have," said Tyscovus, fearlessly. "I have thought it over very seriously and I had almost made up my mind to speak to your father on the subject. So far as my own reputation is concerned, if I do not lose the good opinion of people like you, Miss Willis, I care nothing whatever for what those who do not know me may think. I regulate my conduct from my own convictions and from the kindly judgment of my friends. As to the rest of the world it may, if you will excuse the expression, go to the devil for all I care. But I admit at once, and without reservation, that I would have no right to inveigle another into any arrangement that would injure her in the estimation of the world. A woman's character is not a thing to be trifled with, even when the critics are fools and knaves. Your opinion is quite sufficient for me, and the matter goes out of my mind—with regret, I admit, but none the less definitely."

"If Mrs. Bosler had lived," said Theodora, looking at him with an arch expression, "you might have saved appearances by inviting her also to take up her residence with you. As it is, I am not quite sure that Mr. Bosler would not be sufficient, even in the eyes of the most sensorious."

"That I am afraid would be impossible. But," abruptly changing the conversation, "you have told me nothing about the snakes. Are they still developing?"

"You shall come and see," said Theodora, rising and leading the way.

They went on through the library and the hall to the laboratory. The glass case still stood on the table in the bay-

window, and the rays of the afternoon sun were pouring down upon it. The serpents lay stretched out at full length, their eyes closed as though they were sleeping. Tyscovus opened the little door in the side of the case and touched one of the reptiles. Then he touched the other. Neither moved, or gave any other sign of vitality. Finally, he took each in his hands, but the bodies were limp and hung down like two great ropes. Both were quite dead. Their elevation in the zoölogical scale had been of no use to them. They would have lived longer and more in accordance with their serpent-nature if they had been left alone, to crawl over their native earth with the supply of heat, light, electricity, and oxygen that Nature was giving them. Tyscovus and Theodora looked at the dead animals for some time in silence. "It was a brilliant experiment," said the former, at last, "and, though the snakes are dead, they lived long enough to establish a great truth."

"Yes," said Theodora, they did not live in vain. What are individual snakes, or even individual men or women, in comparison with the demonstration of Nature's laws?"

"If you were to ask the snakes or the men and women who were about to be sacrificed, you might get a somewhat different answer from what I would give. Yet, here are the legs, and they have been made to grow through the agencies you employed. I think you may well be content with the result. However, perhaps there is another lesson to be conveyed, and that is, never to attempt to lift any animal out of its proper sphere."

"Yes, but that lesson is for you," said Theodora, laughing, "rather than for me."

CHAPTER XXVI.

"AN ADMIRABLE CRICHTON."

DURING the remainder of his visit to Chetolah, Tyscovus saw very little of Theodora, the greater portion of his time being taken up in consultations with his political friends in regard to the most advantageous way of conducting his campaign. Mr. Higgins was the most enthusiastic as well as one of the most useful of his adherents. He had prepared lists of the voters, and, as he said, intended to make it his business to see either by himself or by a discreet deputy every one of them, and if possible ascertain his political views. He had already canvassed Hellbender, and had ascertained that more than two thirds of the voters were in favor of Tyscovus. He was sanguine that the rest of the district would show an equally good result, and was accordingly ready to bet all he was worth that his candidate would be triumphantly returned.

Tyscovus had taken out his naturalization papers, and it was arranged that on the afternoon of the same day a mass-meeting should be held at the Lyceum, and that he should be introduced with due formality to the assembled citizens, and should then deliver himself of a speech. The programme was duly carried out. Tyscovus's speech was a straightforward statement of his views on the questions of the day, and was peculiarly emphatic in its denunciations of the lawless spirit that pervaded the Territory. He created, however, a little feeling of opposition when he alluded

to vigilance committees as being, in his opinion, unnecessary, and, as themselves, by their example, countenancing violations of the law. He declared that, though there was a shameful neglect or lack of power to preserve order, yet that the emergency was not one that in his opinion called for any such extraordinary measures as a vigilance committee, the members of which charged themselves with the office, outside of the law, of acting as witnesses, judges, juries, and executioners. He begged, therefore, that if there was any such body organized from among his friends, it might be at once dispersed, and he pledged himself that, if elected, he would devote all his energies to the duty of securing a prompt and efficient administration of all the laws under which they lived.

Although these remarks did not meet with unqualified approval, there were no objections openly expressed and the speech was, as a whole, enthusiastically applauded. Then Mr. Higgins, who presided, called upon the "Hellbender Glee Club" to sing the opening campaign-song, which was done amid a degree of enthusiasm that caused the windows of the building to shake with the reverberation of the clapping of hands, stamping of feet, and all kinds of yells that followed.

The doctor was then called upon for a speech, and when he rose to respond was received with a fresh volley of applause. It was, however, soon evident to all in the room and to no one more than to Tyscovus, that the excitement of the occasion had been sufficient to unsettle his mind to a greater extent relative to women, and especially Theodora, than he had previously exhibited. He began in a somewhat rambling way to speak of the great superiority of the female to the male sex, not only in the human race, but throughout all animated nature. Then he cited the examples of women in all ages of the world who had distinguished themselves in war, in politics, and in science

and art, and declared that the only remedy for impurity in the administration of public affairs was to adopt female suffrage.

He then went on to state that there were many women in Colorado who were perfectly competent to take the lead in the direction of its public policy, and that there was one especially that they all knew and loved, and who had already made her influence felt in their midst. Here some one called for "three cheers for Miss Willis," and they were given with a good-will and energy that excited the doctor to a still greater degree.

He was going on with the most fulsome encomiums of Theodora, and there were already signs among the audience of a disposition to turn him into ridicule, when Tyscovus, who was overwhelmed with mortification at the turn things had taken, determined if possible, to stop the doctor's further progress, even at the risk of endangering their friendship. He felt that his interference would be in her interest; he knew that she discountenanced the introduction of her name into public assemblies like the present, and that, however much she might contend for the right of woman to be educated according to the highest standard of excellence, she was not in favor of the entrance of her sex into politics.

But it was not without fear as to the result that Tyscovus decided to put a stop to the doctor's remarks. He recollected what Theodora had told him in regard to the effect of opposition upon her father, and there was cause to fear that now, when his excitement was at its highest pitch, any contradiction or impediment might act with redoubled power. Nevertheless, the situation was such as to imperatively require interference, and was getting worse every moment. Already cries of derision and mock applause were coming from different parts of the large hall, and even the most sedate and loyal of the doctor's friends were either

smiling at the violence and incoherence of his language, or hanging their heads in sorrow. Tyscovus was sitting immediately opposite the doctor at the very front of the audience, and in full view of every one in the room. He rose to his feet.

"Mr. Chairman," he said—and at the words the doctor stopped speaking, and every eye was, amid the most complete silence, turned on Tyscovus—"I rise for the purpose of calling my friend to order. However much we may agree with him relative to the subject of his remarks; however much we may admire the lady of whom with paternal pride and love he has spoken, this I respectfully submit to you, Mr. Chairman, and to my dear friend, is a meeting called for a special object. It may seem ungracious for me, your candidate, to interpose in this manner, but I am aware that there are other speakers waiting to address you on the questions at issue. I hope, therefore, that my friend will not think it amiss if I remind him that we are here for the purpose of conferring with one another relative to the best means to be adopted to insure the success of the law and order party."

Tyscovus's remarks were received with loud and long-continued applause. He evidently had the whole meeting with him.

Perhaps it was this fact, one that even the most furious lunatic will often recognize, of the overwhelming odds against him, and the consequent impossibility of his speaking with the feeling of the audience so decidedly adverse, that prompted the doctor to act as he did. Without saying a word, he bowed to the chairman, then to Tyscovus, and sat down amid renewed applause from the assemblage. Soon afterward the meeting adjourned, and though the doctor and Tyscovus walked home together, the former made no allusion to the circumstances that had caused him to suspend his speech.

Indeed, the effect had not only not been what Tyscovus had feared it might be, but was apparently very decidedly sedative in character. The doctor conversed with greater moderation in his expressions, and with less tendency to fly off to his favorite subjects, than he had before exhibited. Tyscovus, without thinking, made several remarks, that in the doctor's previous state of mind would certainly have acted as suggestions, just as the idea of suicide or murder is sometimes excited by the sight of a suitable weapon; but now they did not even provoke a response.

In a few minutes they arrived at Chetolah, where they found Theodora awaiting them and anxious to hear the particulars of the meeting.

Tyscovus spoke of the enthusiasm that had been shown, of the large number present, of the eloquence of the speakers, and of the result of Mr. Higgins's canvass. Then, in response to Theodora's direct request, he gave the outlines of his own speech, dwelling particularly on the fact that he had unequivocally condemned all lawlessness, even though it appeared in the respectable shape of a vigilance committee. "I will never consent," he said, "to conceal any of my views on public matters. I think the whole system of retributive vengeance is wrong. Unless a criminal is punished according to law, he had better not be punished at all. If fifty men can hang a horse-thief, unquestioned by the authorities, then any one man ought to have the same privilege. Besides, a code that punishes every offense with death, is more than Draconian in its severity and injustice."

"I am glad you spoke as you did," said Theodora, warmly; "you were certainly right. Papa had, I am happy to say, left the organization before it had done any active work. Last night they hanged a man at Bullion City, ten miles from here, and they are on the track of others. But I am surprised that what you said caused no speeches to be

made against your views. The feeling here is very widespread in favor of the committee."

"I did not certainly arouse any enthusiasm by my remarks on that head, but at the same time there was no open dissent. I am sure I set the audience to thinking. There would be no objection to vigilance committees if they simply made arrests, and turned their captives over to the legally constituted authorities. But to hang them is, in my opinion, deliberate murder."

"You will probably lose many votes by the expression of such opinions," said the doctor, joining in the conversation for the first time—"votes that will come from the law and order portion of the community, and you will gain none from the criminal classes. They will feel safer with Mr. Luke Kittle."

"And if any persons belonging to the so-called law and order party think they would feel safer with Mr. Luke Kittle than with me, they are at perfect liberty to support him. I should dislike to owe my election to any such people."

"I was astonished that they took your opinions so quietly. You seem to have the power of bringing every one around to your way of thinking. I used to be a strong adherent of the committee, but you have converted me entirely. It is not so much what you say, as the way in which you say it. You are so emphatic, and yet there is a degree of consideration for the views of others in your manner, which subdues every one. You remember how bitter I was against Jim Bosler?"

"Oh, yes!" said Tyscovus, laughing; "I recollect that you were exceedingly anxious to hang him to the nearest tree."

"I was one of the party that visited your house on the night of your arrival. I have never told you this before, but you might as well know it now that we are friends. I

kept in the background, and you did not see me. If we had found Jim that night, we should certainly have hanged him. But I would take no part in such a piece of work now. On the contrary, I would do all in my power to prevent it. I had a conversation on the subject with Dorie a few days ago, and she put the matter so strongly before me that I had to retire, to save my self-respect. You have confirmed me in the wisdom of my course. Indeed, you first excited my doubts."

"You make me feel very glad," said Tyscovus, bowing as he spoke. "If I could always have Miss Willis as an aid, I should never fail; certainly, not with you. To-morrow I shall be obliged to go home to look after my watchman and late adversary, Mr. Abe Wilkins, and to get ready for my tour through the district; but I shall never forget your kindness to me.

"We shall miss you very much," said Theodora, "although to-morrow our friends from New York are to arrive, and we shall not suffer for want of society."

"May I ask about your friends?"

"Oh, yes," said Theodora—"first," counting on her fingers, "there is Mrs. Moultrie, a widow lady, the *mater familias;* second, there is Mrs. Sincote, her daughter, also a widow; third, there is Miss Sincote, a girl of ten; and, fourth, there is Mr. Moultrie, a widower, son of Mrs. Moultrie, and, of course, brother of Mrs. Sincote."

"Why don't you add, Dorie," said the doctor, laughing, "that, in addition to his other virtues, he is uncle to Miss Sincote, and grandson of Mrs. Moultrie's mother?"

"Because, papa, those virtues may safely be left to Mr. Tyscovus's imagination." She laughed as she spoke, but Tyscovus, who was one of the most observant of men, thought he detected a little constraint in her tone of voice and in her manner.

"Mr. Moultrie," continued the doctor, "will have, I

see, to depend on me to enumerate his good qualities. In the first place, he is forty years old; then, he is very rich, and he is very handsome, and is over six feet in height, and as strong as a lion. I have seen him bend a crow-bar over his knees, and, as to energy and force of will, I have never seen his equal. He has projected railways in South America and Mexico, and has carried them over lines that the most accomplished engineers had pronounced impracticable. He has tunneled mountains, and dug canals, and built bridges, and now he is contemplating a series of mining operations of the largest scale. Indeed, were I asked to pick out the man in all the country who was energy and will personified, I would select Geoffrey Moultrie."

"But you have forgotten to add, papa," said Theodora, "that he is an accomplished musician; that he has written a play that was brought out in London and ran through a whole season; and that he has, at his own expense and in memory of his wife, built a hospital for women exclusively, and endowed it with funds sufficient for its support."

Tyscovus listened to these laudations with astonishment. He had no idea that such an "Admirable Crichton" was possible in the latter part of the nineteenth century, but he recognized the fact that Mr. Moultrie combined the useful with the ornamental in a way that would have been impossible a hundred years ago. He did not fail to perceive the interest taken by Theodora in what her father said, and the eagerness with which she had supplemented the list of his good points. Was it possible that her heart was interested in this man? He was apparently possessed of just such qualities as would have made him the object of her admiration. She was of too decided a personality to allow herself to be attracted by a man of weak or immature character, or feeble individuality. At the same time, he knew that her own refinement and tenderness were such that a coarse, self-assertive man could never find

favor in her eyes. Yet, she was evidently graciously impressed with this railway, canal, and bridge king whose chief aim in life seemed to be the subjection of Nature by science, and who yet had found time to cultivate the æsthetic. That the description of such a man by Doctor Willis and his daughter with undiguised admiration, was calculated to excite a feeling of jealousy in one situated as was Tyscovus, will not be a matter of surprise. He did experience a slight emotion of the kind, but it was healthy and natural.

"I have never met with such a man as Mr. Moultrie," said Tyscovus, a little stiffly, and with a certain amount of sarcasm in his voice. "We have none such in Poland. It requires the free air of the United States to develop them. They are very useful here. In Poland we should not know what to do with them. We—"

"Then stay over to-morrow and meet Mr. Moultrie," interrupted Theodora. "I am sure you will find much in him to interest you. He is not exactly of your type, but he is of one not far removed."

"I should think he was very different," said Tyscovus, still with a shade of pique in his tone. "Doubtless, however, I should find him very instructive, and, as I was going on to remark, the world, especially a new one like yours, could not do without such as he."

"Then you will stay and learn from him? He will arrive to-morrow evening, and you can, if you choose, drive over to the butte to-day, if you feel anxious about the fidelity of your custodian."

Tyscovus reflected a moment as to whether he should accept or reject this invitation. It was advisable for him to get home now as soon as possible in order to be able to fill his political engagements, but he was, at the same time, anxious to see what manner of man he was who had so completely filled Theodora's conception of an ideal. He was quite sure he would not like the big, burly, bustling man

of business, even if he was a musician, a dramatist, and a philanthropist, and it would be a satisfaction to him to be able to feel in his own mind that he was justified in his dislike, and this he could only do through his personal knowledge of the man. Yes, he would stay and see this paragon. Then he would have done what was necessary to form an intelligent opinion of him.

"I am never willing to leave Chetolah, Miss Willis," he said, at last. "There are charms enough here for me without the additional one of your friends. But you have excited an emotion to which I am not a stranger, though I believe it is supposed to be particularly a passion of women. You have roused my curiosity. I will stay."

"Thanks," said both the doctor and Theodora, in a breath; "and," continued the former, "if you will be ready in half an hour, I will drive you over to the butte and bring you back."

"That will suit me admirably. I would be delighted," he continued, "if you, Miss Willis, would honor my poor home with a visit. I have nothing special to show you, can offer you no inducement except the one that you will be giving pleasure to an exile, and, knowing your goodness, I am not without the hope that you may find the idea a congenial one."

"I think," said Theodora, smiling as she spoke, "that I should like to see how a bachelor-student lives. I have shown you my laboratory, and laid bare to you my scientific heart, such as it is. I think you are bound in common fairness to treat me with equal liberality. Besides, I wish to see the man whom you so nearly killed. So, you see, there are ample reasons of a selfish nature for the visit, without the necessity of putting it on any higher ground, though no motive could be more influential with me than the one you suggest."

Tyscovus looked at her with pleasure depicted on his

countenance. Was there any significance to be attached to the last sentence, or was it only spoken in accordance with the dictates of politeness? Was it actuated by the kindness and consideration of friendship, or was there a still stronger feeling to prompt to its utterance? If Theodora had been a Polish woman, he would have expected such a speech to have been accompanied with downcast eyes and a tenderness of expression that would have left no doubt in regard to its purport. But here there was nothing of the kind. "No motive could be more influential with me than that of giving you pleasure." That was what she had said or implied. But the words were spoken without the accompaniments of languishing eyes and sympathetic voice. Doubtless they were sincere, for she was not a woman to indulge in the use of complimentary phrases, but doubtless, also, she had not taken in the full meaning of the words she had employed, and they were to go merely as the expression of her willingness to oblige him in a matter of no great importance.

While Theodora was getting ready for the drive, Tyscovus had ample opportunity for a little self-interrogation relative to the state of his feelings for her. The expected advent of Mr. Moultrie, with his many attractions, had had the effect, as might have been expected, of quickening the action of his emotional system, and of exciting in him the idea that perhaps the visit of this representative American was not altogether one of mere friendship. Railway, canal, and bridge kings, even if they were æsthetic, did not leave their luxurious and business associations to come several thousands miles to pay visits of a social or friendly character. Theodora had become acquainted with him during the past summer, and they had been at Newport, doubtless seeing each other every day, driving, walking, yachting, dancing, and dining together in an uninterrupted series of occasions. Under these circumstances a

visit, made a month or two subsequently, was a significant event. They had liked each other, or the invitation would not have been given and accepted, and this liking must have been very great, or the long and tedious journey from New York to Hellbender would not have been undertaken.

But, then, what matter was it to him whether Mr. Moultrie was or was not in love with Theodora and she with Mr. Moultrie? Clearly it was none of his business. He had no rights in the case that either of them was bound to respect. He had definitely concluded that marriage between himself and the doctor's daughter was impossible, and yet he had not, subsequently, been more than a few minutes in her company, before he felt this determination fading rapidly away, and he, ready to admit that she was a fit wife for the best man that lived. When with her, the charms of her person and manner drove out of his mind all the horrible images he had evolved from his inner consciousness—of her wearing a dissecting-apron, a knife in her hand, and standing before a table on which lay a human corpse ready for the incision that was to expose the brain or the heart to the eye of the enthusiastic pathologist. The picture was a vivid one. When away from her, it often obtruded itself upon him; but, when he was in her presence, he saw her only as one of the most charming of her sex that it had ever been his good fortune to encounter. Indeed, so great was the influence she then exercised over him that he had, on one occasion, actually found himself looking at her intently, and thinking that her beauty would be enhanced if she were wearing a dissecting-apron and engaged at the moment in anatomical researches. At such time he thought he really loved her, but no sooner was he separated from her than the old thoughts returned, and with them the image in the dissecting-room with all its repulsive impressiveness; and then

he knew that, however much he might admire and respect her, she was not one whom he could make his wife.

Now, it was probable, that matters were approaching a crisis. There *was* a man who evidently had formed a serious attachment for her; and he one that could probably have choice of a wife from among the most eligible maidens of the land. The fact that had been such a stumbling-block to him, Tyscovus, that she had "dissected all animals from man to insects," had evidently no terrors for this man of energy and strong will, before whose ideas mountains, plains, and rivers alike yielded, and who was probably coarse by nature and rendered more so by the character of his pursuits. And a widower, too! A man of experience with women!

If the fellow would only stay away, and give him more time to become acquainted with Theodora, he would be satisfied, for then the association of her with anatomical studies, which now stood out so prominently in his mind, would probably gradually disappear; but to have a decision forced upon him ere he was prepared to make one was uncomfortable, and calculated to disturb his customary modes of thought.

"Shall I make tea before we go?" said Theodora, as she entered the room dressed for the drive. "It will probably be late before we get back."

Tyscovus had been alone, the doctor having gone to see about getting the horses up. He had never seen her look more beautiful than now, dressed as she was in a close-fitting traveling-habit of some soft, woolen material that fitted her to perfection. He felt as though he would like to take her by the hand and say: "I love you dearly; be my wife—dissect as much as you choose. You shall teach me, and we will study anatomy together." They were both standing by the window, for on her entrance into the room he had risen to his feet; their shoulders touched; the word

"Theodora" was on his lips; he felt impelled to take the hand that toyed with the window-sash, and speak. A moment, then, would determine the state of her heart. Yes, he would know, the instant her hand came in contact with his. "Did I hear you say something about tea?" said a voice. It was the doctor's. He had entered while she was speaking, and their backs were turned toward the door. "By all means, Dorie. Nothing is so inspiriting before a bracing drive as a cup of tea. But be quick, for it is time we were off."

She excused herself and left the room. Tyscovus felt chagrined. The opportunity had been all he could have wished. She had apparently been in a friendly mood toward him; he had felt the full inspiration of the occasion. He was not sure that he would have spoken the words that flashed through his mind and have taken her little gloved hand in his, but nevertheless he was discouraged and irritated by what he then regarded as the untimely entrance of the doctor.

He still stood by the window looking out upon the lawn, but gazing at nothing at all in particular. The doctor had taken a book, and was turning over its leaves as a sort of an occupation till Theodora returned with the tea. Tyscovus was roused by her voice. "Perhaps, sir, you will kindly take your tea," dropping him a little courtesy as she spoke. She was in wonderfully good spirits. He took the cup that she held out to him, and thanked her with an absent air. "Why was she so happy?" he asked himself. "Had she intuitively divined what he was about to say and do, and was she glad that she had escaped his declaration? Or was she thinking of the great man who was to arrive to-morrow?" Whatever the cause, the effect was evident. He was inclined to regard both these factors as efficient in making her extraordinarily joyous. He knew how keen the intuitions of women are—how quick

they are to arrive at correct conclusions often from the merest shadow of a premise, and sometimes from a basis of pure imagination. Something in his manner, or the tone of his voice, or the expression, had told her what was likely to come; and she was rejoiced at the opportune arrival of her father upon the scene and the interruption of his design.

And Geoffrey Moultrie was to arrive to-morrow! Part of her exuberant spirits was, doubtless, due to this knowledge. Perhaps she was already engaged to him, and he was coming with his mother and sister to take her away as his bride. A few hours, and he would probably know all. His declaration was only deferred, not abandoned. He would know from her own lips, before this paragon arrived, whether or not she would be his wife.

CHAPTER XXVII.

ON THE BRINK.

"YOUR tea is excellent," said Tyscovus, as he helped Theodora into the carriage that was to take them to the butte, "but I will make you a cup, not better, perhaps, but different. We Poles are very particular about the tea we drink, so I brought a *samovar* with me, and a quantity of a fragrant and high-flavored tea that is rarely seen outside of the Russian Empire."

"If you please, sir," said the coachman, addressing the doctor, who was about to enter the open landau, "there's a carriage just entered the gate."

Both looked in the direction indicated by the man, and there, sure enough, was a large coach rapidly approaching the house. "I shouldn't wonder if it were our friends, Dorie," said the doctor. "If so, we shall have to give up our drive."

He walked toward the coming vehicle as he spoke. It stopped, and a gentleman quickly got out and advanced to meet him. Theodora at once recognized the new arrival, and Tyscovus also discovered in him the great subduer of Nature. "It is Mr. Moultrie," said Theodora; "we shall be obliged to postpone our visit to the butte." Both got out of the carriage. The doctor was looking in at the window of the other conveyance, talking to the inmates, while the gentleman who had alighted stood by his side. They were only a few yards distant, and Theodora started

to go toward them, leaving Tyscovus standing on the porch. She had not, however, taken half a dozen steps, when the gentleman saw her, and at once came to meet her, with a look, which Tyscovus could see even at the distance of fifty yards, of joy on his face. There was shaking of hands, of course, and many exclamations of pleasure. Then they went back to where the carriage was still standing, and there were more greetings; then all came toward the house. Two ladies and a little girl descended, and Tyscovus was formally introduced to the gentleman and each of the two ladies.

"We have arrived a day sooner than we expected," said Mrs. Sincote, a pretty-looking blonde of about thirty years of age. "We thought we should have to stay overnight at Bullion City, but, owing to your thoughtfulness, doctor, in sending over for us, we were saved that annoyance."

"The trains are so very uncertain at this season of the year," said the doctor, "that I told Peter to go three days ago, and remain there till you arrived. I scarcely supposed, however, that you would reach Bullion before tomorrow morning, and we were just going for a drive to the 'Castle' of our friend Mr. Tyscovus."

"Tyscovus!" exclaimed the elder lady; "is he living here?"

"You have just been introduced to him," rejoined the doctor, laughing.

"I didn't hear the name distinctly.—Mr. Tyscovus," she continued, holding out her hand to him, "if you are the son of Count Felinski Tyscovus, I knew your mother very intimately when she was Anna Pinkney, and I was Josephine Ridgely."

"Yes," said Tyscovus, bowing over her hand—"you were one of her dearest friends; I have often heard her speak of you."

"How strange that we should meet in this distant

land!" resumed Mrs. Moultrie. "I corresponded with your mother for several years, but I never saw her after her marriage. She went at once to Poland with your father."

"Yes, and died while I was yet a young child. Meeting with you, madam, brings back a host of recollections of her goodness."

"You are like her in face, but your figure is your father's.—Come here, Geoffrey," she continued, addressing her son, who was helping to remove shawls and cloaks from the carriage. "I have found an old acquaintance, whom I must reintroduce to you. You have often heard me speak of Count Felinski Tyscovus, and Anna Pinkney, whom he married, now thirty-two years ago. Well, this is their son, and I expect you to be the very best of friends."

Moultrie deposited his bundle of shawls and other wraps into the arms of the servant that approached, and then, joining his mother and Tyscovus, was reintroduced by his rather exuberant parent to her new-found friend. The two gentlemen shook hands, and then, after the few conventional words that the occasion required, they, with the rest of the party, went into the house.

Tyscovus had not neglected his opportunities for observing Geoffrey Moultrie. In the first place, he perceived that he was a gentleman. Every word he spoke, the tone of his voice, his manner, appearance, everything, showed that this highest of all stamps that a man can receive had been put on him. Instead of the self-assertive individual, bursting with a sense of his own importance, and glaring around him wildly as though looking out for a mountain to pierce or a river to bridge, he saw a calm, composed, dignified man, dressed in a street-suit such as he might have worn in Fifth Avenue, his linen of unimpeachable whiteness, his boots well blackened, his hands properly gloved, and looking altogether as though he might have just stepped out of a club-house after eating his breakfast, instead of having fin-

ished a railway-journey of more than two thousand miles. He was over six feet in height, robust, broad-shouldered; a powerful man if any indication could be afforded from the breadth of his chest and the straightness of his back. He had his hat off when Tyscovus first saw him, and he had therefore an excellent chance to study the face of the man that, he felt, was his rival. It was not one with which he could find fault. The forehead was broad and high, all his features were well marked, his complexion was clear with a slight tendency to ruddiness, and his hair and beard, which were both short and well-trimmed, were of the chestnut-brown tint not often seen nowadays, but often noticed in the portraits of Van Dyck and Rembrandt.

Although, as the doctor said, Moultrie was forty years of age, he wore his years with the ease that most men exhibit when they have lived healthful lives, morally as well as physically. There were no gray hairs on his head or face, and no crow's-feet about the corners of his eyes.

As Tyscovus regarded him, he was sure that there was something about his face that was familiar to him—a resemblance to some one he had met before. It was not in the features, perhaps, so much as in an occasional expression; but whether it reminded him of man or woman he could not for the life of him tell. He puzzled himself about the circumstance several times that day, but he could not solve the mystery, and finally it passed out of his mind for the time.

Soon after entering the house, all the new-comers went to their respective rooms. Theodora had also excused herself and disappeared, probably, to look after household matters which, doubtless, required special attention now that half a dozen people were added to the contingent. Then there was another stir over the arrival of the baggage and two maids—the latter, as is generally the case, making more ado than had their mistresses.

Being alone, Tyscovus looked around the drawing-room for something to engage his attention till the return of some one with whom he could converse. He turned over the leaves of a photograph-album, thinking that he might find there a portrait of Theodora; but it only contained pictures of fifty or more men and women that he did not know. He was glad, however, to find that Mr. Moultrie's likeness was not in it.

Then he studied the furniture and *bric-à-brac.* A Capo di Monte vase occupied him two or three minutes. Then there was a Japanese bronze representing a crocodile with a man standing on its back, wringing the water out of his single garment, while he held a knife between his teeth. The group was full of action, and it also took several minutes of his spare time.

Finally, he espied the piano, which stood in a distant corner. Once he had been a good performer, but he had not touched the keys for many months. However, he went to it, raised the lid, and seating himself before it began to play, not heeding what chords he touched. Automatically, as it were, he struck into a composition of his countryman Chopin, and, while his thoughts were of far different subjects, his fingers brought out all the beautiful sadness of the piece that only one who knew it perfectly in all its delicate shades of meaning could hope to elicit. Somehow or other, the music turned his mind to the contemplation of his own solitary life, and all the strange details of his remarkable career flashed in procession before him. Once more he saw himself in a Siberian prison, confined in a large apartment with a hundred other prisoners, many of them wretches as degraded as the world ever sees; again, toiling amid ice and snow at tasks above his powers, and punished if the full tale were not given; then his escape, his pardon, his vision, if so he might regard it, which had, by its suggestions, induced him to come to America, and

had therefore, been the crisis of his life; his journey across the plains, his discovery of the butte—Jim Bosler, Mrs. Bosler, Lal. Had he forgotten her? No, she was not forgotten. The memory of her had slept but it was still there. He saw her now as when with tearful eyes, and a face such as a transfigured martyr might have worn, she rose to her feet after the fervid prayer for his welfare into which she had poured her whole soul; and then, with a look into which were crowded all the passions of the moment, had rushed from his presence as might have done a frightened fawn.

Still he played, and still it was the sweet, sad music of his own land, often associated as it is with the memory of the heroes that have died in its defense—the *Polonaise de Kosciuszko*, the most mournfully beautiful of all; of which Liszt has said that women can not hear it without breaking into sobs—Polish women, he doubtless meant—and which often brings tears to the eyes of obdurate men, came to his mind and flowed from the instrument, as his fingers swept over the keys, in all its despairing melody.

Suddenly he stopped; he could go no further; he had tortured his own soul past longer endurance. He closed the piano, and, rising to his feet, turned to leave the room, resolved that he would get rid of his melancholic mood by a brisk walk over the prairie; but, on raising his eyes, he saw Mr. Moultrie standing in the middle of the floor.

"I feel almost as guilty," he said, smiling, "as though I had been listening to a private conversation. You Poles, when you interpret your national music, especially Chopin's, put your emotional natures so thoroughly into it that the notes seem more like words than musical sounds. They speak to one so directly and with such force, they express every shade of meaning with such delicacy, that when I hear them played as you play them they awaken not only my feelings but my intellect as well."

"I was playing without object. I suppose I drifted into Chopin's music because it was ingrafted into me at an early age by my father, who was a true artist. But I am, at best, only a sorry performer, whereas I understand you are an accomplished musician."

"I am very fond of music, and I learned to appreciate Chopin very early in my life. I went with my father to one of his receptions in Paris when I was only about ten years old. Although I was but a child, scarcely in fact more than an infant, the circumstance made a great impression upon me, and I remember it as though it were yesterday."

"You have been more fortunate than I," said Tyscovus, "for I never saw him."

"He had heard that I was inclined to be musical," continued Moultrie, "and he had requested my father to bring me with him to his *salon*. He was standing, surrounded by lovely women and distinguished-looking men, a pale, thin, slight, intellectual being whose expression, as I recall it now, was one of peculiar sweetness and sadness. Every one looked charmed, all were at their ease; he was receiving his guests after the true Polish fashion, forgetting himself, and giving all his powers to insure their enjoyment."

"You interest me greatly," said Tyscovus, when Moultrie paused. "Pray go on."

"There is not much more to say," continued Moultrie. "I have since visited Poland several times, and I have always been struck most by the hospitality of the people from peasant to prince, and which is so clearly heart-felt. The '*Czym lopat tym rad*' is no mere formula with them, as is the '*Toda esta a su disposicion de V Señor*' of the Spaniards."

"Oh, you speak Polish!" exclaimed Tyscovus, with surprise and joy.

"A little; I could not very well help learning something

of the language, for I lived in Poland three years while employed as one of the engineers surveying the routes for several railways, and afterward in superintending their construction. Then I learned, also, to love the people, and the reminiscences of Chopin that came back to me from childhood, were rendered still dearer to me by the strains of Chopin's music which from farm-house and palace, from road and from street, almost constantly reached my ears."

"All this is very pleasant to me," said Tyscovus; "I like to hear you talk, for every word you utter touches a responsive chord in my own heart. Let us take a walk! No, you must be too tired after your journey for that; rather let us go into the library where Miss Willis not only allows smoking, but professes to like it. Then you will light your cigar, and I my pipe, and you will tell me more about your experience of Poland."

Moultrie was very willing to act upon Tyscovus's suggestion. He tried to induce him to accept one of the cigars that he had recently brought from Cuba, but the Pole preferred the pipe, that had for many years been his friend.

"I would rather hear you talk than talk myself," said Moultrie, after they had seated themselves in large leather-cushioned arm-chairs, which showed by every feature of their construction that they were comfortable. "A man who can expound Chopin as you can must have a great deal to say."

"Yes, I suppose I have a great deal to say, for my life has been full of incident. But there has been so much more sadness than joy in it that I am afraid to begin, lest I should disturb your appetite for the delightful 'tea' we are going to get directly. No! tell me something more of Chopin. Which of his compositions do you admire most?"

"That is almost impossible for me to say, for I have

never asked myself the question. I love them all: but nothing, to my mind, that he has ever written can surpass the *adagio* of the Second Concerto, the Grand Polonaise in F-sharp minor and the Funeral March in the First Sonata. This last is the most sublime composition of the kind I have ever heard, and no one but a Pole, mourning for the woes of his native land, could have poured forth such heart-breaking, despairing, majestic sorrow. I heard it when it was performed for the first time at the funeral ceremonies of the great genius by whom it was composed."

"How have you been able to acquire such a critical knowledge of music?" exclaimed Tyscovus, with admiration depicted on his countenance—"you, whose pursuits lead you into the field, the forest, the mountain! By what mystical economy of time have you been able to construct railways, tunnels, bridges, and all the other great works that man in these latter days requires, and at the same time become so true an artist?"

Moultrie smiled as he said: "You overrate my artistic knowledge. You must remember that I selected the topic of conversation. You shall see me some day display my ignorance of the subjects you will choose for discussion. Chopin and music generally, little as I know about them, are my strong points. But I think a man can always find time for whatever he really wants to do. *Wants*, mind you; not simply *wishes*. Well, I always wanted to know something of music, and hence I continued to study it under what, to some people, would have been unfavorable circumstances."

"Did you ever write a book?"

"No," answered Moultrie, laughing. "God forbid! I wrote a play once, and that is quite enough. There has been no great demand for more."

(This was not strictly correct, for the manager of one of the most prominent New York theatres had, ever since

the success of the play that Moultrie had brought out in London, been importuning him for a dramatic work.)

"You are what they call in this country a 'practical man'?" said Tyscovus, interrogatively.

"Yes," answered Moultrie, smiling again at the *naïveté* of Tyscovus's remark. "I am nothing unless practical. I do not see how I could have been anything else and have accomplished the work I set out to do, and yet I am not quite sure that I like the word. Applied to an engineer that follows his profession, it puts me in mind of the signs one sometimes sees in New York, of 'John Smith, Practical Plumber,' or 'John Jones, Practical Hatter,' and of one that I saw in a by-street of 'Hugh Johnson, Practical Whitewasher.' I always feel like inquiring, Who are the plumbers and the hatters and the whitewashers that are not practical?"

"If I ask you any more questions," said Tyscovus, laughing, "you will think my Yankee blood has become extraordinarily stirred up, and yet I should be delighted if you would relate to me all the details of your life. I can conceive of nothing more interesting or instructive than the well-told experience of a man who has overcome the obstacles that Nature has placed in the way of progress."

"I am sure you would be disappointed. My life has not been different from that of a traveler, armed with all the appliances of modern science and civilization to enable him to accomplish his purposes. I have bored holes in mountains with diamond-drills, and blown them up with dynamite; have dug ditches, called canals, through deserts with excavators each capable of doing the work of a hundred men; and have employed caissons in constructing the foundations of bridge-piers; but that is all. Without the man of science, the laboratory student, the inventor, I could have done none of these things. I have only used the means that they have given me. And," he added, with

a tinge of sadness in his voice, "like you, I have had my sorrows."

"But the same means are open to everybody," said Tyscovus, after a respectful silence at Moultrie's allusion, "and only one in a million, perhaps even a less proportion, employs them. Your intelligence, energy, and perseverance are the chief factors, after all. The maker of tools is not the equal of the man who knows how to use them."

"There I must take issue with you at once. The inventor, the originator, is almost invariably the superior of the one who uses the machines or the ideas he creates."

"As compared with the mere mechanic, yes, but not as regards the ideationist who sets the mechanic in action. A copyist may be lower in the mental scale than the man who invented steel pens, but the one who thinks out the ideas that the writer transcribes to paper is above them both."

At this point Theodora and the other ladies entered the library, and the doctor followed close after. The conversation then became general, and in a few minutes "tea" was announced.

Tyscovus had thus enjoyed an excellent opportunity for forming an opinion of Moultrie, and he had, with his usual quickness, arrived at a conclusion. In the first place, his prejudices had been entirely dissipated. Not a single one of them had been confirmed. Instead of a clumsy, awkward man, vain of his achievements, and being able to converse of nothing else, as is generally the case with what are called "self-made men," he had found a gentleman polished in manner and in speech, who had not once mentioned, except in the most general way, anything that he had done, and then only in answer to direct questions. He was evidently a man that was unobtrusive, because he felt his strength, and that knew that his works would speak for themselves, with every one whose good opinion was worth having. Perhaps he was not much of a metaphysician or

of a philosopher in the usual acceptation of either word, but he was evidently well-read; he knew many things outside of engineering, the strength of materials, or the number of cubic yards of earth a mountain might contain; he was cultivated, he had taken pleasure, even amid the engrossing work that had put him in the very front rank of capitalists, in the study of literature and music, and he had a kind and sympathizing heart, for he loved Poland and its people. No, there were no traces in manner, speech, learning, or sentiments of the vulgar rich man about Geoffrey Moultrie.

The more Tyscovus reflected upon the matter, the more he was convinced that, if not already engaged, Moultrie and Theodora soon would be. So far as the conduct of one to the other was concerned, he could see no evidences that any feeling stronger than that of friendship existed between them. There were no assiduous attentions from him to her, no air of expectancy on her part, and no special desire manifested by either to be in each other's company. At the same time there was an ease, a confidence in their relations, that seemed to Tyscovus to be a strong indication that matters between them were settled. When he himself had first made his appearance at Chetolah, Theodora had evinced decided pleasure in being in his company, and there had been no apparent diminution in the warmth of her feelings toward him. Had she not said, only a few hours ago, that no motive could be stronger with her than that of pleasing him?

But with Moultrie her manner was as calm, as unemotional, as free from demonstration of all kind, as though she felt that she was perfectly secure in his heart and he in hers. There was none of the exuberance, on either side, which, judging from her remarks in the afternoon, he had been led to expect; and yet, from the smile which unconsciously lit up her face when Moultrie spoke to her, and

from the marked attention he gave to every word she spoke, and the interest it appeared to excite in him, Tyscovus judged that there was at least a degree of affection between them which, if not exactly love, was a very short remove from that passion.

They had finished tea, and the party had repaired to the drawing-room. Tyscovus had found himself at Theodora's side, and had escorted her from the table; Mrs. Moultrie, Mrs. Sincote, and the doctor were engaged in earnest conversation about people they had met during the past summer, and places they had visited. Moultrie appeared for a moment to hesitate which party he should join. Finally, he decided in favor of the larger group, and was soon engaged in an animated discussion with the doctor relative to mining operations in Colorado.

"What do you think of Mrs. Sincote?" said Theodora to Tyscovus, as they entered the drawing-room.

"Mrs. Sincote!" he exclaimed; "I do not know her."

"Mr. Moultrie's sister," she explained.

"I have not thought of her at all; I have thought, however," he continued, moved by a spirit of audacity unusual with him, "a good deal of Mr. Moultrie, and"—after a little pause—"of you."

"Of both of us together?"

"Yes," he answered, gravely.

"What have you thought of us?" she inquired, looking him in the face, not as though she were offended, but with an expression of kindly good-nature.

"You give me courage to speak," he answered, after he had steadily regarded her for an instant. For a moment the intoxication of the occasion overpowered him. The words were on his lips, "I thought that in you lay all the joy of my life, in him all its misery"—when his thoughts reverted with the suddenness of a flash of lightning to a face bathed in tears, but shining with the ecstasy of love;

to a plaintive voice invoking the blessing of God upon him; to a graceful form disappearing in the shades of the "Little Cañon." "No," he said, his manner becoming still graver, "I can not tell you what I thought."

"Dorie!" cried the doctor, "how much silver does the ore from the 'Tit-for-Tat' mine yield? I have just been telling Moultrie that it is one hundred and twenty dollars to the ton, but he appears to think I am overstating it."

"No," she replied, as Moultrie rising went toward her, "you are under the mark. Fifty tons have given an average of one hundred and thirty-five dollars to the ton."

"I did not dispute the statement, Miss Willis," said Moultrie, laughing; "I only expressed my surprise, and you have increased my astonishment. When I last heard from it, it was yielding only about eight dollars to the ton.—Have you become interested in the mining industries of your new country, Mr. Tyscovus?" he added, turning to that gentleman.

"No, I have the whole subject to learn. As a politician, which seems to be my present vocation, I shall, of course, have to familiarize myself with all its details."

And this was the end! He felt now that he should never ask Theodora Willis to be his wife. Lal Bosler had come between them and forbidden the bans. Her spirit had risen up in all its loveliness, and saved him from an act into which his true heart did not enter. He knew that he had deceived himself, and that, sweet as was the charm that Theodora had cast around him, it was not love, as he understood the feeling, that she had evoked. He watched her as she and Moultrie joined each other. Had she imagined his thoughts, and was she chagrined or pleased at her narrow escape, for the second time, from a declaration? Certainly, there were no signs of a disturbance of her mental equilibrium, for she talked and smiled as though every thought she had was one of joy. Presently Moultrie escorted her

to the piano, and played an accompaniment while she sang. He had never heard her sing before, and her rich contralto voice was another revelation to him. The song, "*Voi che sapete,*" was not a sad one, and she sang it without the slightest sorrowful inflection, but yet with all the feeling that the words and music required. Yes, she was heart-sound so far as he was concerned. She finished, and Moultrie bent over her and said something to her, probably a few words of thanks. He had risen and was standing by her side. She looked up at him for a moment, and Tyscovus caught the expression of her face. "That is love!" he thought. "She never looked at me like that."

The next morning, as he was about departing for the butte, the doctor called him into the library.

"My dear friend," he said, his face beaming with pleasure, "I know you will congratulate me when I tell you that Theodora is engaged to Moultrie. They settled the affair this morning during a long walk before breakfast. He fell very much in love with her last summer, it seems, but he was afraid, he says, to declare his affection, for she gave him so little encouragement. It appears now, however, that he had made more of an impression than he suspected. They are both very happy, and will, doubtless, continue so to the end of their days, so far as it depends on them."

"I do congratulate you with all my heart," said Tyscovus, clasping the doctor's outstretched hand. "They are admirably suited to each other. May I speak to them?"

"Oh, yes! Theodora looks upon you, she told me this morning, as though you were her brother. I believe she would like to have you in the house with her all her life."

"She will always be very dear to me."

"I wish you were my son, old fellow!" exclaimed the doctor, putting one arm around Tyscovus's neck; "I shall miss Theodora awfully, and I know no one who could so nearly fill her place as you. But here they come." As

Moultrie and Theodora entered the room, "You can say to her what you just said to me."

Tyscovus advanced to meet the happy pair; each held out a hand to him, and he clasped them both.

"I told papa," said Theodora, "that he must treat you as one of the family."

"And I," rejoined Tyscovus, "have told him that you will always be very dear to me. Was that right?"

She turned her face to his, and looked at him, but did not speak.

Then, he bent over, and pressed his lips to her forehead.

"Yes, it was right," she said, softly.

"Then, you will always be very dear to me. God bless you!"

An hour afterward, the doctor, who was going to The Cañon, was driving him over to the butte. He left him at the bottom of the knoll, and Tyscovus, climbing up the steep side, was soon in his own house.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"THANK GOD YOU ARE SAFE!"

WHEN Tyscovus arrived at the top of the butte, he found that the "Monkey" had employed his spare time in cutting up into fire-wood the logs that had formerly constituted the walls of the stable, and that his long arms were then engaged in wielding the axe for the same useful purpose.

"Everything's gone on right here, I b'lieve," he said, addressing Tyscovus. "I thought I'd just take a little exercise with the axe, though, to be sure, I hadn't leave or license to do nothin' o' the kind. I guess, as I've about finished all the rest, I mought as well tackle that 'ere tree," nodding his head as he spoke toward the tall pine-tree which reared its ungainly form, sole arboreal occupant of the butte. "Thar's a couple o' cords o' wood in it sure, and you mought as well have it down here as to have it standin' thar whar it ain't no use to nobody."

"Yes, you may cut it down," said Tyscovus. "Have you had any visitors during my absence?"

For a moment Wilkins hesitated, and became a little confused in his manner. Then he answered, shifting his axe from hand to hand and looking down at the ground while he spoke, "Well, thar mought 'a' bin one or two down here from Hellbender, but I didn't mind 'em much."

"Who was here?"

"Well, Mr. Higgins mought 'a' bin one on 'em."

"And who might the other one have been?"

"Well, the other mought 'a' bin Colonel Brattle," answered Wilkins, still uneasily.

"What did they want?"

"I s'pose I mought as well up and tell you all about it!" exclaimed Wilkins, with desperation—"though both on 'em told me I warn't to say nothin', for they thought as how you'd kick ag'in it, and sp'ile the whole thing."

"I think you had better tell me."

"Well, you see, thar's about a hundred o' the boys, as I'm a sort o' captain to, and the whole on 'em votes all one way. I'm goin' down among 'em to-night, and, I guess, when the 'lection comes round, they'll know which way to go."

"Do you know what my views are about the lawlessness existing in this Territory? I shall do my best to put it down, and to severely punish all such persons as you and your associates, when you commit crimes."

"Well," said Wilkins, smiling, "I guess I know what you think, and I guess you'd do it too."

"I certainly will if elected, do all in my power. Now if you put this matter clearly before your friends, and use no threats to make them vote as you wish, I see no objection to receiving their support. The sooner they come around to the side of law and order, the better for the Territory, and the better for them.

"Thar won't be no mistake on that p'int," said Wilkins, with decision, "but I'd like to see the son of a gun as would dar' to go agin what I told him; I'd punch—I mean," he continued, with all the suavity of manner he could assume, "I'd just reason the thing out with him, and I guess he'd do about what was right."

"I think," said Tyscovus, after a moment's reflection, "that I had better say a few words to your people, and then there won't be any misunderstanding. If you will get

them together at The Cañon to-morrow afternoon at three o'clock, I'll come over and speak to them."

"I guess that's all fixed. Thar's to be a meetin' thar to-morrer afternoon at three o'clock, as Mr. Higgins told me. I'll have all the boys thar, and, ef Kittle's gang interferes, thar'll be a high old time, I tell you!"

"I hope there won't be any trouble, but I suppose my right to address a meeting of my fellow-citizens is unquestionable, and I shall certainly attempt to exercise it."

"Thar ain't nothin' like bein' ready for ary a thing as mought turn up. That's the best way, I guess, to stop a row. You see," he added, with a knowing smile, "I've bin thar."

They entered the house, and Tyscovus found everything exactly as he had left it. Not an article had apparently been disturbed, and he expressed his satisfaction, at the same time offering Wilkins a ten-dollar gold-piece as pay for his services.

"I ain't goin' to take no money," said that individual with a half-offended but determined air—"not ef I knows myself. You see you kind o' saved my life, captain"—he had learned the application of the title from Mr. Higgins—"for ef you'd a-kept up that squeeze ag'in my throat half a minute longer, I'd a bin a goner, sure!"

"Yes, I suppose you would," said Tyscovus, smiling; "but, you see, I thought you were already dead. Of course, there was no use in squeezing the throat of a dead man."

"No," said Wilkins, with emphasis—"o' course thar warn't. Thar ain't nothin' surer nor that."

"Then I don't see that I am entitled to your gratitude for not killing you."

"Well, perhaps not, captain; but I've got it all the same. And then when you thought I was dead, you tried to bring me to, and you jerked me into the room so as the coyotes wouldn't spile the corpse, and laid me out quite reg'-

lar. It war darned mean o' me to go off with your things after that."

"Yes, there I certainly agree with you."

"Yes, thar ain't no mistake about that. But I say, captain," Wilkins continued, with an air of diffidence, as though he was asking a great favor, "ef you'd jist show me how you did that grip on my throat, I'd be all-fired obleeged to you. I would, by jingo—Dang me!" he went on enthusiastically, "ef it warn't the best thing o' the kind and the neatest done as ever I seen."

"I am afraid you know tricks enough of that kind already. I never had occasion to use it before, but I have often seen it employed in Siberia by keepers against mutinous prisoners."

"Well, as I call the thing to mind, you jist pushed your clinched fist ag'in my Adam's apple, and the breath didn't have no room to go in by."

"Yes, that was what I did to you."

"Well, I'm darned glad you let up when you did. You see, what with the fits and you a-sqeezin' my windpipe like that, I couldn't a-held out long. I guess them fits'll git me some day."

"All the more reason why you should lead a life of quietude."

"That's as true as gospil. Now I'll go and cut that 'ere tree down, and to-morrer I'll come back and chop it up into fire-wood."

Wilkins left the room, and in a few moments Tyscovus heard the blows of the axe ringing in the clear air. A feeling of regret came over him at the idea of the destruction of the tree. It struck him as a piece of vandalism of which he ought not to be guilty, and, going out, he called to Wilkins who had already chopped a big gash in the side of the old pine.

"Stop!" said Tyscovus; "I've changed my mind about

that tree. You need not cut it down. Some other time, perhaps; but not now."

"All right, captain," exclaimed Wilkins, at once ceasing his work. "It's your tree, and you're the man as have got all the say about it. It's as hard as iron, and I ain't pertic'lar anxious to chop any more ag'in it than there's any needcessity for. But I guess I've about done for it. I've made a ring clean round it, and when you does that to a tree it kills it as dead as a saw-log."

"Well, let it stand. I'm sorry I didn't stop you before."

"I guess I'll go now and fix things over at The Cañon. Good-by, captain. May be I'll jist look in on you ag'in tomorrer mornin'. I'm jist in time to ketch the stage. Yes," looking up the road toward Hellbender, "thar she comes, and I'm off."

After Wilkins had taken his departure, Tyscovus spent a good portion of the rest of the day in studying certain maps and books relating to Colorado, with which the doctor had supplied him. It was his intention to prepare himself, as fully as was in his power, for the duties of the position to which, as far as could be judged by those signs upon which the political prophet bases his predictions, he was quite certain to be elected. Indeed, he could scarcely think it within the range of possibility that the voters of the Fourth Council District, the majority of whom were respectable and law-abiding people, would return such a despicable character as Luke Kittle to the Legislature. To a certain degree he felt humiliated at being a candidate against such a man. The mere fact that the highest chamber of the legislative body was open to him, seemed to be a cheapening of the nomination he himself had received, as well as a depreciation of the councilorship. However, he was in for the contest, and he really began to feel that at last a career was being opened to him such as he could never

have expected would be offered him in his own land. Once or twice the thought of his book occurred to him, but only to be dismissed without the least feeling of regret. He had outgrown all the peculiar ideas with which he had ascended the butte. He no longer desired solitude; his ideas relative to social statics which he had intended elaborating had become so essentially modified during the short time he had lived in Colorado that, in order to expound them, he should be obliged to reconstruct the whole framework of his treatise. Indeed, at the rate at which he was acquiring new ideas, it would not be long before all that he had written in notes or memoranda would be comparatively useless. The book must certainly be given up for the present, and perhaps not resumed till he had acquired greatly increased experience, and should be well advanced in years. In becoming a naturalized citizen of the United States, Tyscovus had acted in entire good faith. His own land, though he should never cease to love it, was in the hands of the spoiler, where, for all he could see, it was likely to remain till the progress of free ideas and education should have remodeled the map of Europe. That this result would ensue, there was not, in his opinion, a reasonable doubt; but it would not take place in his time, nor for many a long day after he had been gathered to his fathers. His Polish property had been confiscated to the crown when he was sent a convict to Siberia, but, through the intervention of influential friends, it had been restored. It was very valuable, consisting both of land and salt-mines, and yielded him a large revenue, which as fast as received he had invested in United States bonds. Moreover, he had large interests in mines in Austrian Poland, and had besides inherited a considerable estate through his mother, most of which was in the form of houses and lots in Baltimore and New York.

As he sat, according to his custom after his day's work, smoking his meerschaum, his thoughts naturally turned to

his plans for the future. He had become much attached to the butte. The air on its summit was pure and fresh; the view of the surrounding country was one of which he never got tired, commanding as it did the horizon throughout its whole circuit; and doubtless, in time, the country would become settled with a better class of inhabitants than the majority of those who now occupied only a very limited portion of its wide domain. Here, there would be no lack of all the elements of a reputable and pleasant society, constituted of such people as the Willises.

It would be very easy to make himself exceedingly comfortable on the butte, for it admitted of improvement and embellishment in almost every direction. There was stone enough on its sides and at its base from which a large and fine house could be constructed, and there was room enough on the top for such a building. He determined that, as soon as the election was over, he would begin his arrangements for the erection of the house, and that as he had considerable knowledge of architecture, acquired in the course of his military education, he would make his own plans and superintend their execution. In Wilkins, he would have a factotum on whom he could confidently rely as a devoted adherent to his interests, and he designed taking him permanently into his service, now that the man had reformed and become rehabilitated, as it were.

Of course, he could not escape reflections upon the notable events that had occurred during his recent visit to Chetolah, and upon the whole he felt no regret at the turn that matters had taken in regard to his relations with the Willis family. His present position as one of their few confidential friends was very pleasant to him, and he could not but admit that Moultrie and Theodora were admirably suited to each other. He wondered, however, whether or not she would continue to dissect after her marriage. Moultrie had struck him as being a man who would not be

likely to have much sympathy with women following such practices. Although endowed with many of the most sterling qualities of man, he was at the same time so artistic in his tastes, and had, apparently, so elevated an idea of woman in her sphere as the complement not the verisimilitude of the other sex, that Tyscovus did not believe that the study of practical anatomy and other branches of medical science, the delivery of lectures to miners, and performing experiments in evolution, would be in accordance with his views. He remembered, however, how his own long-felt convictions had been overturned, and he therefore at once conceded that even if Moultrie was set in his notions, Theodora's arguments, and still more the charms of her personality, and the evidence which she herself afforded, that the influence of such studies as hers did not necessarily destroy the delicacy of the female mind, were competent to revolutionize his opinions.

He perceived too that there was a good deal of incongruity between the emotion that he had felt toward Theodora, and the slight heart-ache he had experienced when informed that she had given her love to another man. He was confirmed in his opinion that he had really never loved her. In fact, there was no other view at all compatible with the little emotional disturbance he had suffered, and from which he had now altogether recovered. What, then, had been the feeling that had twice brought him to the point of asking Theodora to be his wife, and from which only an interruption in the one case, and a recollection in the other, had saved him? Can man really mistake the character of his emotions? Was it not rather real love that he had felt, but love that had not become fixed in his mind? He recollected to have once seen, in Poland, the effect produced by an impassioned preacher. The man had so worked on the feelings of his hearers by the vivid pictures that he presented to them of the joys of heaven on the one hand

and the torments of hell on the other, that men and women were thrown into uncontrollable states of sobbing and weeping, during which they made the most sincere promises of amendment. He was sure they were sincere, although some of the worst characters in the place were among the most vehement in their professions of conversion. For, not only was the disturbance too realistic to be an assumption for the occasion, but when the preacher, taking advantage of the condition to which he had brought them, sent his collectors among the audience, the alms were tenfold greater than had ever been received in that church before—many giving who had never heretofore given a copeck, and to an extent far beyond their means. But no sooner were they out of the church than they attacked the eloquent priest, who had so hurried them into repentance and charity, and robbed him of all they had bestowed!

It was very much the same thing with Theodora and himself. When he was with her, he felt the allurement of her beauty, her intelligence, the sweetness of her disposition. She fascinated him—dazzled him. She was so unlike any other woman he had ever met, that his attention was at once engaged, and then he found himself considering her many excellences of mind and of person, to the exclusion of all thought of what might be incongruous. But, so soon as he was out of her presence, the sprite of the dissecting-room made its appearance with all its unpleasant accompaniments, and the tender impressions that had been made upon his heart were ruthlessly effaced.

He would probably never know with certainty the exact state of her feelings toward him; but it was impossible for him to avoid the conviction that, though she had been almost if not entirely unscathed, she had been in such a frame of mind that, if Moultrie had never made his appearance, he himself might, had he so chosen, have stood first in her heart. She certainly had liked him a great deal.

She had sympathized with him in all those matters relating to him that were calculated to excite sympathy in a woman's breast, and though liking and sympathy do not constitute love, yet where they are felt, the more intense passion is ready to be lighted up. They are the kindling that are to ignite the combustible materials that are laid in every human heart.

He looked at his watch; to his surprise he found that it was nearly nine o'clock. He had forgotten, in the interest of his studies and the intensity of his thoughts, to make the tea which, with a biscuit and a piece of cheese, constituted his evening meal when he was at home on the butte. He, therefore, got his *samovar*, and, lighting the spirit-lamp under it, went out for a breath of air from the open, while the water was being brought to a boil. The night was cold, but clear, not a cloud was to be seen anywhere in the sky, and the moon, being near its full, allowed him to see far away in every direction. Not a sound reached his ear. Nothing, in fact, can be more silent than night on the prairies, when the coyotes are not barking.

He stood looking now at the heavens, watching the moon and stars, and again at the play of light on Bobtail River, which he could trace out, lying like a broad band of planished silver, as it meandered through the plain below. He was in a contemplative mood that night, and was disposed to continue his reflections, when suddenly he heard the neighing of a horse, apparently not far off, on the road leading to Hellbender. He listened, and ere long detected the sound of horses' hoofs on the stretch of hard earth that, he knew, only extended about a mile from the butte, the rest of the prairie consisting of the light alkaline soil, only strong enough to nourish the sage-bushes that covered its surface. Looking in the direction whence the sound came, he distinctly saw winding over the plain a procession of horsemen, numbering, he judged, near a hundred persons.

As they came nearer, he made them out more distinctly, and could even hear the clanking of their Mexican spurs and the jingling of their horses' bits as they rode along, two by two, the line extending several hundred yards. They passed close to the base of the butte, and, as they went by, not one of them speaking a word, Tyscovus counted them. There were one hundred and five, in fifty-two files, of two each, besides the leader, who rode some ten paces in advance of the rest.

"Who are these men?" he asked himself, "and on what business are they bent?" He followed them with his eyes till they were lost in the prevailing gray hue that overspread the prairie. Then he hurried into the house, and quickly returned with a powerful field-glass that he directed toward the procession, no longer visible to the naked eye. Were these men going to The Cañon? No, they had turned off from the main road, and had taken another which led from it at right angles across the open plain. "The vigilance committee!" he exclaimed. "They are going to Bighorn Spring, to hang Jim Bosler!"

For a moment the force of the thought, the correctness of which he did not doubt, fairly overpowered him, for he saw how utterly helpless he was to prevent an act that he felt would be disgraceful to the cause of law and order, which he had pledged himself to uphold. What could he do, even if it were possible for him to reach Bighorn Spring as soon as the committee? If he could get there before them, he might inform Bosler of his danger, and thus give the man an opportunity to effect his escape. He knew that there was a short cut through the Little Cañon and over the *mesa*, but he had no knowledge of its course, and to attempt to find it in the uncertain light of the moon, still more imperfect in the depths of the cañon, would be absurd. Now he lamented the fact that he had no horse, for, were he mounted, he could follow the avenging caval-

cade, and soon overtake it; and, though the determined men constituting the committee would probably refuse to yield to his solicitations to spare the life of the man on whose destruction they were so firmly resolved, he might be able to cause some delay, and in such cases no one knows what a moment may bring forth.

No, there was nothing he could do. He could only wait, and trust that by some fortunate combination of circumstances Jim Bosler might escape the lynching that he had already so often managed to avoid, but of which he now appeared to be in greater danger than ever before.

He, therefore, sadly re-entered the house, mortified at the idea, doubtless correct, that the very men, who were engaged in the contemplated outrage against the law of the land in which they lived, were among the most prominent of his supporters for a seat in the Legislative Council of the Territory. He began to feel a strong disgust with the whole affair, and to wish that he had never allowed his name to be brought before the people for the position in question. He felt that he was to a certain extent identified with these men, and the fact that, notwithstanding the unequivocal opinions he had expressed relative to vigilance committees, the organization was still continued, showed how little real influence he had with those who professed to regard him as their leader. He was almost persuaded to retire from the contest, and leave the so-called law and order party to select some one as their candidate whose conscience was sufficiently elastic to permit him to sanction the employment of extra-legal methods to punish crimes. The subject required consideration. The water in the *samovar* was boiling furiously. He made his tea, and drank several cups while pacing the floor. Perhaps Jim Bosler was at that moment dangling from the limb of a tree!

And Lal, what had happened to her? He felt no ap-

prehensions in regard to her safety. He knew enough of the working of vigilance committees to be aware that, though their actions were illegal, there was a rude justice in all that they did, and that they were especially considerate for the innocent members of the culprit's family. But, though she was doubtless safe from injury or insult, the probable situation in which she was placed was terrible enough for any woman, even were all possible tenderness shown her by her father's executioners. The thought of the mental suffering she would be compelled to undergo distressed him beyond measure, and he inveighed bitterly against the forced inactivity to which he was condemned.

"I can not stay here," he said, at last; "I must go out and at least make an attempt to reach Bighorn Spring. I feel as though action of some kind is necessary. I am like a rat in a trap. And, perhaps, she may have escaped, and is now wandering about in the Little Cañon. Yes, I must go, if only to ease my own mind." He put on his hat and overcoat and buckled around his waist a belt containing his revolver. Then, leaving the lamp burning, and putting several big logs on the fire, he went out into the passage-way. For an instant, before descending the hill, he stopped to listen. Various indistinct sounds reached his ears from the plain below, and—yes, there could be no doubt about it—some one was climbing the butte. A form approached him, staggering with uncertain and faltering steps as though about to sink to the earth. It was that of a woman. His heart gave one great bound as he rushed forward. Already she had reached the steps; he held out his arms. "Lal," he cried, "my darling! thank God, you are safe!" She saw him, heard him, but ere he could clasp her to his heart, she fell exhausted at his feet.

CHAPTER XXIX.

IN THE TOILS OF THE ENEMY.

It was Friday afternoon, September 22, 1873, and the following day was the one on which Mr. Bosler had agreed to deliver his daughter into the tender and loving hands of his friend "The Gulcher." It was about five o'clock in the afternoon, and, if everything resulted in accordance with the plans of the high contracting parties, before that time to-morrow Lal Bosler would be Mrs. Luke Kittle. And yet no arrangements had been made for the important ceremony of the following day. No *trousseau* had been ordered for the bride, no brides-maids selected, no wedding-feast prepared. Indeed, the lady for whom the obligations and honors of matrimony were held in expectancy did not even know of the solicitude for her advancement in life that was entertained.

Mr. Bosler sat in the chief room of the cabin, endeavoring to prepare himself to make the announcement that could not much longer be deferred. He had assumed his favorite attitude, his chair tilted back on its hind-legs, and his feet on the table, upon which also stood a tin cup and a bottle of his well-beloved beverage.

"I guess she'll raise bloody Moses!" he said, emphatically, as he poured himself out another dose of whisky, "but, it's one o' them things as is got to be done, and I'm the man as has got to do it. She ought to be obleeged to me, she ought, for takin' all this trouble jist to see her well

sot in life. Whar would she 'a' bin, I'd like to know, ef it hadn't bin for me? And this is what I git for doin' my dooty. It's danged hard, it is!"

Mr. Bosler swallowed the whisky and wiped his eye, but, whether of a tear excited by the strength of the undiluted "rot-gut," or by the excess of his emotion, will certainly never be known in this world.

He ceased talking, and appeared for several minutes to be absorbed in deep thought. Then, without taking his legs from the table before him, he reached over, rather inconveniently, and helped himself to another cup of whisky. This potation, seemingly to his surprise, emptied the bottle. If he wanted any more, he would be obliged to disturb his comfortable position, and replenish the bottle from the keg which stood in a distant part of the room, and which itself was rapidly approaching the state of vacuity most unpleasant for its owner to contemplate. Evidently arriving at the conclusion that he should, in the course of that sitting, want additional supplies, he took his feet from the table not without a sigh, and, standing as erect as was possible under the circumstances, glared around the room, as though endeavoring to recall the location of the keg. It was strange that Mr. Bosler should have forgotten a matter so near to his heart, but whisky is not conducive to goodness of memory. Men under its influence have even been known to forget the names of their wives and children. Mr. Bosler had as yet only drunk a quart, but he had done so, under the pressure of his thoughts, much more rapidly than was his custom, and the effect, therefore, had come upon him rather suddenly. He stood, supporting himself by resting one hand on the table, while the other clutched the bottle. He looked first at one side of the room and then successively at each of the others, in a helpless sort of a way. Then he peered anxiously into the corners, but they were dark, and littered up with other things, and no

sign of his treasure was to be seen. To start around the room on a voyage of discovery, with so much uncertainty in his mind relative to the position of the keg, was not to be thought of, and besides, such a procedure would have been extremely hazardous to the state of equilibrium which, even with the assistance of the table, he maintained with difficulty.

Now Mr. Bosler was one of those individuals, rarely met with, who become intoxicated in their legs before their speech is markedly affected. He could not walk very well at that particular moment, but he could articulate words almost as perfectly as ever. He therefore sat down, though, as an evidence that he had not abandoned his original intention, he still kept his hold upon the bottle. "I'll git her to git it," he said, smiling weakly at the brilliancy of the idea. "Lal!" he called, in as loud a voice as he could command. "Lal!" he repeated, still louder.

The girl was in the adjoining room, but the door between the two was closed, and she was deeply engaged in reading from the little book that Tyscovus had given her. She was much more neatly dressed than it had been her habit to attire herself. Her hair was smoothly arranged, and her face and hands were clean. Indeed, ever since her visit to Tyscovus she had paid increased attention to matters of the kind in question. "Everything about him was clean," she had said; "he didn't have a spot on his hands, and I guess I'll see if I can't be like him. When you git used to it I guess it's about as easy to be clean as dirty." Lal was quick to learn, quick to acquire a habit, and hence it was not long before she found in truth that it was as easy to be clean as dirty, and much more comfortable.

Ever since her mother's death, Lal had witnessed circumstances in connection with her father that tended to excite suspicions in her mind that some mischief was in contemplation of which she was to be the subject. With a

degree of clumsiness that argued little for his intelligence, Mr. Bosler was constantly singing the praises of Luke Kittle. She recollected that when on that morning he had started for The Cañon, his feeling against "The Gulcher" was very intense, and that always before that he had never mentioned his name without calling down curses on his head. Now, all was changed. No virtues were too great for Mr. Kittle. He was everything that was good, and the revolution in her father's sentiments had taken place during his visit, and after he had had communication with her enemy.

Moreover, the circumstance of the satchel bearing Mr. Kittle's name, and containing a large sum of money, probably the exact amount marked on the outside, was one calculated to augment her suspicions. Where had this money come from? Why had it been given to her father? He had made no explanation of the matter to her, while heretofore he had always shown a disposition to take her into his confidence, and even to ask her advice. That it had come from Luke Kittle she strongly believed.

Then her mother's altered demeanor, the occasional paroxysms of weeping with which she had been affected, and which were not unobserved by her daughter, and, last of all, what had probably been an altercation, from the excitement consequent on which she had broken a blood-vessel in her lungs and died, gave a painful confirmation to the fears and misgivings with which Lal's heart was full.

And yet, after all, there was nothing positive upon which she could fix her mind, and there was one possible solution of the matter which, if correct, although bad enough, did not directly concern her. Her father might have robbed Kittle of the money. It was true that, so far as she knew, he had hitherto restricted his thieving operations to horses and mules, and he himself had always declared that he had never allowed himself to be tempted in any other direction.

She was, however, well enough acquainted with his character to understand that any declarations he might make relative to his righteousness were to be taken with many grains of allowance. That there was a mystery connected with the money was quite certain. That this mystery in some way or other concerned her she had serious apprehensions, but the idea that her father had sold her, and that the day for her nuptials with the man of all others in the wide world she loathed was only twenty-four hours distant, never occurred to her as she sat holding in her hand the precious volume, at once a witness of her offense and of its forgiveness.

Then she thought that it was probable her father was endeavoring to induce her to look kindly upon Kittle, with the view of introducing him to the house, and giving him an opportunity to plead his own cause with her; and the more her mind dwelt upon the subject, the more disposed she was to accept this interpretation. Evidently, he was inclined to propitiate her, for he had never exhibited a greater apparent desire to keep her in good spirits, and to maintain pleasant personal relations with her, than since his visit to The Cañon.

However, as with most persons who are in doubt relative to a matter that closely concerns them, and in regard to which the evidence is insufficient or conflicting, Lal changed her opinions many times in the course of each day, and at last, as time went on, and nothing occurred to interfere with that rather unstable peace and happiness that she enjoyed, her fears began to abate. Then it was that she began to think that the time had arrived for her father to keep his promise of moving away from that part of the country, and entering upon the new life that he had at times, in a somewhat uncertain manner it must be admitted, declared he was anxious to lead.

It was to this subject her thoughts tended as she closed

the book she had been reading. A passage, one of those marked by Tyscovus, had attracted her attention, and she had read it over several times, in order that she might miss no shade of its meaning. It was a letter that Count John had written to his daughter, from whom he was separated, and was in answer to one from her, in which she had given him an account of her studies and of the progress she was making. "Do not forget, my dear Delphine," he said, in concluding the letter, "that in order to acquire such a knowledge of the world and its work as every gentlewoman ought to possess, you can not rely solely on your own individual senses. Cultivate them, of course, to the highest points of excellence, and even then you will have to use those of other people, whose minds and whose facilities for acquiring learning have been greater than yours. No one, even though his life were extended to a thousand years, could obtain such an amount of personal experience as would suffice to make him an educated and large-minded man. But as we can not go about and ask learned people, even if they were all alive, and we had access to them, what they know, we must read the books they have written. Read, therefore, and read with discrimination: for, as there have been and still are many worthless men and women, so there are many worthless books, for books are merely the reflections of the minds of those who write them."

She had just read this letter, of which the foregoing passage is an extract, and was thinking whether in the time to come she would ever be able to follow the advice Count John Tyscovicius gave his daughter, when she thought she heard her father calling her. She started to her feet and listened. Yes, he was calling her, and in no gentle tones either. She put away her book, and went into the next room.

"Well, Lal," said Mr. Bosler, turning his head around to look at her as he heard the door opened and shut, "I was

jist gittin' to think as how you mought be deef. Ef I've called you onst, I've called you fifty times."

"I only heard you onst, pop, and I came jist as soon as I could."

"Readin' ag'in, hey?"

"Yes, I was readin'."

"That's right; that's jist what I like to see. Thar ain't nothin' that's half as good for a gal like you, as is goin' to be the wife of a first-class man, as readin'. I guess ef I'd read more when I was a little shaver, I'd 'a' bin a darned sight better man nor I am now."

Mr. Bosler suddenly felt that now the time had come to lay bare his scheme to Lal. His mind was tolerably clear, and what little it had lost in perspicuity, through the action of the whisky, was more than compensated for by the increased determination and recklessness that large potations always gave him. He was sober enough to recognize the fact that the task before him was one of peculiar difficulty, and he was determined to exhaust all his powers of manœuvring and cunning before resorting to invective or coercion.

"Ef you'd jist be so kind," he continued, "as to find thet 'ere kag, and to fill this 'ere bottle, I'd be etarnally obleeged."

"O father!" said Lal, imploringly, laying her hand on his arm, "don't drink any more to-day!"

"Well, you see, Lal," said Mr. Bosler, "it ain't so all-fired much as I've drunk to-day; only one bottle, as sure as shootin', and it ain't much of a bottle neither."

"Don't drink no more, father," she repeated, stroking his face with both hands—"for my sake!"

Under the stress of the emergency that was upon him, Mr. Bosler's wits were getting sharper every moment, and the idea struck him that here was an excellent opportunity for making an apparent sacrifice, that could not fail to

exert a good deal of influence over his daughter. Taking her hands in his, he said, therefore, in the most plaintive voice he could command:

"What was that you said, Lal? Say it ag'in."

"For my sake, father, don't drink no more."

"Well, I won't. When you comes to me and says, 'For my sake don't do this or that,' dang me ef it's in my heart to hold back! You're all I've got now, Lal, sence your poor mother's death, and thar ain't nothin' as I wouldn't do for you."

She bent over and kissed him, while the tears started to her eyes.

"I'm very glad," she said at last, "and thar's only one thing more as I'd like to ask."

"You can jist ask me what you please, and I'll do it jist as sure as my name's Bosler; ef I don't, you may call me a liar, and when I says that you knows as well as I do that I means it. Out with it!"

"Promise me now, father dear, that you won't drink no more whisky, never ag'in."

"I'll do it!" exclaimed Mr. Bosler, bringing his fist down on the table with a force that made the rickety legs creak at their joints! "Ef you was to ask me to tear my heart out for you, I'd jist jerk it out, and pitch it in that corner. Never a drop o' whisky goes down my throat ag'in till you tells me to drink it! You see, I mought be sick—but I leaves it all with you; and ef I was dyin', I wouldn't drink onless you told me to."

"Now I think all'll come right. We've only got to git away from here, and then we'll stick to each other. Won't we, pop?"

"That we will, Lal! You and me's got to pull together now. It wouldn't do for you and me to fall out, you goin' one way and me goin' another. Would it?"

He looked at her with a degree of cunning in his face

that was almost supernatural as he spoke these words. But she did not see it, looking as she was dreamily at vacancy; thinking, doubtless, of the prospect of life before her. Had she observed the devilishness of his countenance, her suspicions would certainly have been aroused.

"You've done that for me, pop, as I'll never forgit all my life," she said at last. "All our troubles come from the whisky, and now you've promised never to drink another drop until I tell you. Oh, I'm very happy now, and thar ain't nary a thing in all the world as I wouldn't do for you —nothin', leastwise," she added, "as it would be right for me to do."

"That's the way I like to hear my gal talk. It shows that she ain't one o' them kind as takes all they kin git, and never gives nothin' back. It'd be a darned poor world, Lal, ef all the favors was on one side—a sort of a lopsided affair, as would jist fetch things to etarnal smash in no time. Now, thar's only one thing," he continued, putting his arm around her waist and drawing her down on his knee, "as I'd keer to have my gal do for me!"

"What's that?" she said, with a little fluttering of her heart which made itself felt in her throat.

"Well, you see when your poor mam was alive, she was always a-talkin' to me about how she hoped as you mought be settled in a home of your own some day, and jist afore she died she was speakin' about it ag'in. It 'peared to be on her mind night and day, and says she, 'Jim, I only hope as I'll live long enough to see Lal married to a good man.' And says I, 'Thar I'm with you. Ef we could only see that gal settled, why you and me could jist pass in our chips as easy as rollin' off a log.' And says she, 'Thar ain't no man in all the country as is as risin' and pop'lar as Luke Kittle—' and then, jist as she said them words, the blood gushed out o' her mouth, and, as you know, she never spoke ag'in. Them war her dyin' words."

It is due to the versatile and ingenious Mr. Bosler to state that this speech was entirely unpremeditated. When he began it, he had no clear conception of what he was going to say, but he had gone on to its conclusion trusting to the inspiration of the moment, and astonished in no small degree at the readiness with which the numerous lies it contained were suggested to him, and the facility with which he arranged them into a coherent statement. It might have seemed to an observer, acquainted with all the facts, as though the father of lies was at the speaker's elbow, whispering each falsehood into his ear.

All through its deliverance Lal felt that a crisis was approaching, the nature of which she had no difficulty in determining. The whole scheme flashed before her; she recognized every statement it contained as an untruth—a willful, deliberate, malicious untruth—and, when Luke Kittle's name was mentioned, she started to her feet and remained standing, with an expression of fear and horror, not unmixed with defiance on her face, till her father had finished.

"My mam never said no sich words as them!" she rejoined, with as much calmness as she could command.

"She did, Lal; them's the very words, and they was the last as she ever spoke."

"No, she never said 'em. I knows what she thought o' Luke Kittle. Her and me talked it over many a time."

"Well, now, it stands in reason I ought to know; for I war thar and heered 'em, and I'll take my Bible oath," he continued, bringing his fist again down on the table, "as them's the very words, jist exactly as I've spoke 'em to you."

"She never said 'em!" persisted Lal, with increased energy, her feeling of determination and resistance increasing. "I knows what my mam thought, and, ef you was to swear all night on a stack o' Bibles as high as a house, I wouldn't believe it!"

"And you're the gal as war a-goin' to do anything I asked you!" exclaimed Mr. Bosler, with bitterness.

"I said anything as was right; but for me to marry Luke Kittle would be the worst thing as I could do, and I'll never do it, for I hate him worse nor I hates a rattlesnake."

"And you're a-goin' to run ag'in your poor dead mother's dyin' words!" said Mr. Bosler, with a tone which, if it went for anything, indicated the existence of a broken heart. "She as brought you on to the world and raised you from a infant! I wouldn't 'a' thought it of you—no, dang me ef I would!"

"She never said them words—never! never!" exclaimed Lal, her temper beginning to rise under the reiteration of what she knew to be a falsehood. "She war always good to me," she went on, clasping her hands together and raising her eyes as though appealing to the spirit of her mother, while her voice became more tender in its inflection. "She wouldn't 'a' stood by and seen me married to a man as I hates, for she was a good friend to me always—always."

"Well, perhaps you mean to say as I lies," said Mr. Bosler, keeping control of himself, but, in the agitation and absence of mind due to his suppressed rage, endeavoring to fill his cup from the empty whisky-bottle. In the disappointment consequent on this attempt, he broke down, and, dashing his fist on the table, exclaimed: "Well, whether she said 'em or not ain't much account, nohow. *I* say 'em, and you've got to marry him!"

"No!" exclaimed Lal, her face becoming pale with anger, while she walked up and down the floor in her excitement—"no!" she repeated, "I'll never marry him!"

"Yes, you will, too!" continued Mr. Bosler, rising from his chair and yielding at last to the storm of anger that raged within him. "You'll marry Luke Kittle to-morrow afternoon at three o'clock! Thar ain't no doubt about it,"

he went on, seizing her by the wrist as he spoke. "It's all fixed. The weddin'-guests is invited, the squire's spoke to, Luke'll be here, and you'll be his wife as sure as my name's Bosler!"

"And you call yourself my father!" said Lal, trying to free herself from his grip, but only succeeding in pulling him about the room till he caught hold of a thick shelf fastened to the wall. "Whar did that money come from?"

"Whether I'm your father or not, don't matter to you now, I guess," he gasped, somewhat overcome by the efforts he had been obliged to make to keep from falling down; "and, as to the money, that's none o' your business neither."

"I know all about it," said Lal, succeeding by a sudden effort in breaking loose from his hold on her wrist. "You got it from Luke Kittle, and he paid it to you for me."

"It ain't none o' your business whar that money come from. It's mine, I guess, and that's all thar is in it. Now you kin go and git ready, for to-morrow afternoon, at three o'clock sharp, the thing's a-goin' to be done."

"No, it won't be done. I'll never say the words as makes me Luke Kittle's wife!" said Lal, with all the determination of her strong will emphasizing her speech. "You may bring him here, and the squire may come, and all the people, and you may make me come too, but that's all. That's about as far as you kin go. The making the promise is *my* work, and I'll never make it!"

Mr. Bosler saw that the matter was becoming more serious every moment. He knew perfectly well that, if Lal persisted in her determination, he could never complete his bargain with Luke Kittle, and that he would have to refund the five thousand dollars that he had received. What to do in the emergency that was upon him he did not clearly perceive. He knew Lal well enough to be aware that she would not recede from her declaration, and that, though

he might bring her to the metaphorical altar, he could not make her utter an actual word. A woman standing mute in face of the question, "Wilt thou take this man for thy wedded husband?" has it in her power to defeat the most thorough-going scheme that may have been devised against her. And Mr. Bosler was perfectly aware of this fact. What was he to do? The excitement had sobered him, and while Lal stood in the middle of the room, expressing her resolution to resist, he was feeling his bodily strength returning, and was testing the ability of his muscles to do their work by striking out right and left with his arms, and kicking vigorously at the air with his legs, and then stretching himself to his full height.

But, while thus engaged, he did not lose sight of the fact that thus far he had been defeated in his contest with Lal. He had only been able to utter threats which she had been prompt to defy, and her ability to resist was, as matters now stood, far beyond his power to force. Clearly, the present scheme must be abandoned for another more feasible, and in which her opposition would go for naught. Gradually, all the few scruples he had entertained relative to the propriety of his actions were being effaced from his mind. He saw before him a rebellious member of his family whom it was necessary he should reduce to subjection. The affection he had had for Lal was rapidly disappearing under the cupidity excited by Mr. Kittle's magnificent liberality, and the appreciation of the resistance she offered to his wishes. He must keep the money he had received, he must get the rest that had been promised, and he must assert his headship of his own household.

But, as matters now stood, he did not perceive any way by which, notwithstanding the necessity that existed, these purposes could be carried out. He was prepared to adopt any ideas that might suggest themselves to him and that promised the success he desired, but the ideas did not come.

In his extremity he determined to make a final effort to conciliate his antagonist, trusting that in the mean time some plan for effecting his wishes might occur to his mind.

"Well, Lal," he said at last, with the peculiar suavity he knew so well how to assume, "I guess you're right about it, after all. I knows jist as well as you do that ef you *kin* lead a hoss to the water you *can't* make him drink ef he don't want to. I've done the best I could to git you fixed in life with a man as would be a credit to the family, and I feel as ef I'd about done my dooty up to the hub. You kin have your own way about it, and I can't help myself; but I did think as how, after the promise I made you not to drink any more whisky, as you'd do somethin' to obleege me."

"I'll do anything but that, father. I'll work for you, and you needn't do a stroke all your life. I'll keep you in food and in good clothes. I'll talk to you or read to you. I'll go away or I'll stay with you, jist as you likes; but I can't marry Luke Kittle."

While she was speaking, an idea occurred to Mr. Bosler which, though at first it shocked him a little, in a few moments appeared to him to be the only one that could possibly, if carried out, enable him to accomplish his designs. He sidled up, therefore, to where Lal was still standing, and pretended to be examining one of his fingers. "You tore one o' my finger-nails 'most clean off, Lal, jist now, when you was a-haulin' me around the floor. You ain't got sich a thing as a knife about you, has you?"

"Yes, I have, and a sharp one, too," said Lal, without any suspicion of deceit on his part, taking from her pocket a large clasp-knife, opening the sharpest blade, and handing it to him. "Kin I cut it for you? I don't see how I done it."

Mr. Bosler took the knife; but no sooner did he have it in his hand than he shut it, and, seizing Lal around the

waist, held her tight, at the same time carrying her bodily toward a corner of the room where lay a pile of ropes of various sizes, together with some stout leather halters which he had had occasion to use in his horse-thieving expeditions.

"Now who's master, I'd like to know! I'll teach you, dang me ef I don't, that when I says a thing I means it; and tharfore, when I tells you as you've got to marry Luke Kittle, you've got to do it, or worse'll happen to you!"

From the moment that Lal felt his arms around her, she had not ceased to struggle with all the strength she possessed, so that Mr. Bosler's words were enunciated with much difficulty, and not with the regular sequence in which they are printed. She fought with all the ferocity of a young tigress, using her feet, hands, and teeth, with a skill and strength that told badly on Mr. Bosler's person. But he was a well-seasoned man, one who had for many years—all his life, in fact—been accustomed to situations in which, for short periods, very great address and strength were required. Gradually, therefore, though not without a good many ejaculations the reverse of pious, he succeeded in forcing her over to the place he had fixed upon.

He had thus far refrained from any attempt at bodily harm, mainly for the reason that he did not wish to annoy "The Gulcher" by disfiguring or injuring the woman who was to be his wife; but, when he arrived at the corner where the ropes and straps lay, he found that there was going to be trouble in stooping down and fastening one or more of them around Lal's struggling and squirming body, unless he brought her into a state of comparative quietude. He had only partly succeeded in saving his face from her hands by turning his head away from her; but, notwithstanding this manœuvre, she had inflicted several deep scratches on his countenance, which detracted from such facial beauty as he possessed, and caused several drops of blood to fall on the floor.

As to Lal, she felt that she was contending for even more than her life. She at once surmised that he intended to tie her hand and foot, and leave her in the cabin while he went off and brought Luke Kittle, to whom he intended to deliver her, marriage or no marriage. She had it in her mind to escape from his hold, and not only that, but to rush from the house and seek safety in flight; but she felt that she was being, little by little, overpowered. She was strong, but the man was stronger, and she saw that in a short time she would become exhausted, and that then he would be enabled to accomplish the end he had in view. If she had had the knife of which his stratagem had deprived her, she would not have hesitated to plunge it into him, with the intention of doing him as much bodily damage as possible. As it was, she could do nothing beyond resisting as long as her strength held out, hoping that by a bare possibility he might succumb before she did.

But the odds were against her. Mr. Bosler had gotten her to the corner. The cords and straps lay on the ground before him. He did not wish to strike or choke her if he could avoid doing so, but he began to think he should be obliged to do something of the kind ere he could let go with one hand, in order to pick up a broad, thick strap with a buckle, on which he had fixed his eye, and which would serve admirably as the initial ligature. "Ef you don't stop your fightin', you young wolf, I'll knock your teeth down your throat!" he exclaimed, with all the accent that intense rage could give to his words. "Don't you hear what I say!" as Lal, in answer to his threat, dug her nails into his face. "Well, ef you don't stop, dang you, I'll see ef I can't make you!" With that, he tripped her up with one leg, and she fell heavily to the floor, but only to seize him with both arms, and to continue the struggle by trying her utmost to drag him down. In this, however, she could not succeed. He held on to the logs

with one hand, and picked up the strap with the other. Her strength was almost gone; she lay panting on the floor at his feet, and she was unable to resist him as he slipped the strap under her, and, buckling it tight across her legs, sat down on a chair to recover his breath and to contemplate his conquest at such ease as he could at that moment command.

"Now, see what you've done to my face!" he exclaimed, as he wiped the blood away from the large and deep scratches; "I'm in a pretty fix, ain't I, to go to a weddin'!"

"I'd 'a' killed you ef I could," said Lal, though with a feeble voice, for she was thoroughly exhausted with the gallant fight she had made. "You call yourself my father! It's a lie, and you knows it! You're no father o' mine, nevermore from this day."

"Father or no father, I'll give you a lesson, I guess, you she-devil, as you won't forgit in a hurry, even after you're Mrs. Luke Kittle, and I ain't done with you yit, neither."

Lal made no reply; she perceived that she was incapable of continuing the contest with the least hope of success, and she therefore lay quiet on the floor, waiting for the next move her conqueror should make.

Her state of expectancy was not of long duration. Having rested sufficiently, and refreshed the inner man from the contents of the keg, Mr. Bosler proceeded leisurely about the work that he had in hand.

First, with numerous emphatic admonitions to be quiet, that, however, were entirely unnecessary, he tied Lal's ankles together with a strong cord, passing it around them several times, and tying it with one of those scientific knots that his vocation as a horse-thief had taught him.

Then he readjusted the strap, and, taking another like it, fastened it around her arms and chest, though not with-

out some difficulty, as Lal fought with her hands, tearing several tufts of hair from his scanty supply, and inflicting a little additional damage on his countenance. Finally, he fastened her wrists together, and, as she was then so securely bound as to be incapable of moving hand or foot, he gave himself no further uneasiness on her account.

In her suspicions relative to the further plans that her father had devised, Lal was altogether right, it being his intention to leave her at Bighorn while he rode over to The Cañon as rapidly as possible, and, while acquainting Luke Kittle with the fact of his inability to make her go through with a marriage ceremony, offer to deliver her to him, trusting that in time she would be willing enough to become the ostensible wife of that gentleman. The real wife she could not become, as he knew, though Lal was unaware of the fact, for Mr. Kittle had already a legal incumbrance of the kind living in St. Louis. The actual Mrs. Kittle had, however, never given her husband any trouble since he had left her to try his fortune in Colorado, and Luke had assured Mr. Bosler that there was no danger to be feared from her, as she had, without waiting for the law or death to release her, taken up with another man. Mr. Bosler concluded that "The Gulcher" would at once recognize the fact that he was loyal in his intentions relative to Lal, and would agree to the proposal offered him. All he would have to do would be to come to Bighorn with a vehicle and take Lal away with him. Things of a similar character had been done before, as Mr. Bosler well knew, and he therefore had precedent for his conduct. He recollected reading only a short time previously of the abduction of a young woman from New York, after she had been rendered insensible by some stupefying drug. It was not necessary to drug Lal, as there was no one about the neighborhood to whom she could appeal by any outcry she might be disposed to make. In fact, the more noise she made,

the more she would become exhausted. As to resistance, he had very effectually guarded against anything of the kind.

"Now," he said, with entire *sang-froid*, while he carefully inspected the straps and cords with which he had bound Lal, "I guess you'll stay jist exactly on this 'ere spot till I come back. I'm a-goin' over to The Cañon to bring your husband to see you, and I'll be back in short o' two hours. I've give you a chance to be married like a decent gal, but you chose to kick up ugly, and now you've got to take things as they come. I told you as I'd give you a lesson, and now you're a-gittin' it strong. Hopin' as I'll see you ag'in soon," he continued, smiling under the influence of the pleasant emotions he experienced, "I bid you good-day, miss, and hopin', too, as you'll have a pleasant time till I gits back." With these last words he made a profound bow in mock politeness and left the house. Then, mounting his horse, he rode at full speed to The Cañon, where he found "The Gulcher" doing the honors of his "saloon" to half a dozen gentlemen of sporting proclivities. A few words sufficed to explain matters, and he was much relieved to find that Mr. Kittle's affection, or whatever else he chose to call it, was so strong, that he was willing to accede to his proposition, and go at once to Bighorn prepared to bring Lal to The Cañon.

"She's only a little bashful, I guess," said Mr. Kittle. "Besides, she don't know me yet. She'll find out in a couple of days that I ain't as black as I'm painted, and then she'll come round, I guess. I'll fix up the best room in the house for her, and I'll keep the squire ready to step in at any moment that she says she's willing."

"That's the way to talk," exclaimed Mr. Bosler, delighted with the easy acquiescence of his friend. "Now git your team hitched up, for thar ain't no time to lose. She's as vicious as a rattlesnake. Jist look at my face!

I've bin a-fightin' her all day, more or less, but I've got her fixed."

"Poor girl!" said Mr. Kittle, sympathetically; "she must be uncomfortable, so we'll hurry over and cut her loose. It's pretty hard on her, I guess, but it'll be all the better for her in the long run. I'm always kind to women."

He did not stop to explain what his idea of kindness was, and in a few minutes he and Mr. Bosler were driving briskly over the road to Bighorn in a light wagon, well provided with wraps, and behind a pair of fast trotters that on a good road, and with plenty of room, it would have been difficult for any other team in the country to overtake.

CHAPTER XXX.

BROKEN FETTERS.

WHEN Mr. Jim Bosler took his departure from Bighorn Spring, he left Lal, as we have seen, lying on the floor of the cabin, and tied hand and foot so securely that he was satisfied, on careful inspection, that she would not be able to move till he returned and loosened her bonds. For several minutes after he left the room, she remained quiet—first, because she felt thoroughly worn out with the length and severity of the struggle through which she had passed; and, second, for the reason that she wanted to be perfectly sure that he had got fairly out of the neighborhood before she made any attempt to release herself. She knew that he was an adept at all kinds of stratagems, and that it would be just like him to pretend that he had gone, for the purpose of coming in on her suddenly and catching her in an effort to get free.

But she had no idea of remaining captive till Mr. Kittle's arrival, and then to be delivered over into his custody. She was a quick-witted and determined girl, possessed of plenty of self-confidence, and with courage enough to carry out any idea of relief that upon reflection might seem to be advantageous. For a while, she considered what she should do, and very naturally arrived at the conclusion that the first thing to be accomplished was getting loose from the cords and straps that confined her. Very slight attempts in this direction were, however, sufficient to convince her

that she had a task before her that would require all her skill and strength. Her legs were bound by a strap and a cord, both of which were drawn so tight that any motion was impossible. Another broad strap went around her body and fastened her arms above the elbows to her chest, and then her wrists were tied together by a cord that cut into her skin, so forcibly had Mr. Bosler drawn it, and, from the constriction of which, her hands were already greatly swollen. The only motions preserved to her were those of the elbow-joints, both of which could be moved together to a limited extent, and of her fingers, which, however, were stiff and swollen.

Having satisfied herself relative to her actual condition, Lal looked around the room for the purpose of ascertaining the possibilities of the situation. She was at least ten feet from the table upon which stood the tin cup and empty whisky-bottle. If she should reach it she might be able in some way or other, the character of which she could not determine, to get hold of the bottle, and, breaking it, use the sharp edges of the glass to divide the ligatures which confined her. Experimenting still further, she ascertained that, by using her elbows as fixed points, she could manage, though with great difficulty, to drag herself over the floor. She at once began a series of movements of the kind, and in the course of several minutes succeeded in arriving at the table. What was she to do next? There was no difficulty about upsetting it, but, if she did this, the bottle would be certain to roll over the floor away from her, and she would have another weary journey to perform. And if she succeeded in reaching it, how was she to break it? And if she broke it, how was she to use the sharp fragments of glass, with her hands bound so tightly together that she could do no more with them than to bend and straighten the fingers, without being able to move the wrists at all? Clearly the case was a bad one.

Then, she thought, she would drag herself out of the house and as far as she could away from it, to some place where she would be able to hide. There were rocks, and tall grass, and stumps of trees, behind which she might conceal herself, and thus have some chance of escaping observation. When Bosler returned with "The Gulcher," the probability was that, not finding her in the cabin, they would suppose she had succeeded in getting free, and had made her escape to Hellbender, or some other place of refuge, not imagining that she was hidden close by. But then, if they should start off in pursuit, what was she to do next? Alone, and tied hand and foot in a wilderness and without sufficient protection from the cold of the night, to say nothing of the danger from wild animals, the big prairie wolf—the lobo—the coyote, the panther, all of which abounded in that region, with an occasional grizzly bear coming down from the mountains when he felt particularly nomadic—that would be her situation. Still, the risk of all these dangers was far preferable to the certainty of Luke Kittle.

Mr. Bosler had now been gone a full half-hour, and would return certainly in two hours, and perhaps sooner. What she had to do must be done quickly. In two hours she could pull herself probably a quarter of a mile, and she resolved that she would skirt the *mesa* in a direction away from The Cañon, till she came to the bed of a stream which at that time was dry, but which, in the spring and summer, carried off the water from the melting snow and ice in the mountains, and which, after a rain-storm, was sometimes a raging torrent.

She began to work along over the floor toward the door, when she saw something almost within her reach which caused her heart to beat with joy. She strained her eyes to their utmost in trying to assure herself that she was not mistaken, for she could not afford to waste her strength in

vain journeys around the room. The light was bad, but at last she made up her mind that she had seen correctly, and that there, not five feet away from her, lay the knife that Mr. Bosler had obtained from her by a false pretense. In the confusion and hurry incident to his attack on Lal, he had missed putting it, as he had intended, into his waist-coat-pocket, and it had dropped, unperceived by either of them, on the floor.

To obtain the knife was now an object of prime importance; but, although she succeeded, after a little time, in dragging herself to where it lay, so that it was in contact with the back of her right hand, she had great difficulty in getting it between her fingers, and still more in opening it. Finally, however, after consuming more than half an hour in her efforts, she succeeded in opening the sharpest blade, and then, with a little delicate management of her fingers, she was enabled to begin to cut away at the cord that fastened her wrists together. After that the task was comparatively easy; one by one the turns of the cord were severed, and at last her hands were loose.

She had used her fingers with great difficulty, not only because her hands were tied, but because they were swollen and so numb that she could not tell, without looking, that the knife was there. When the cord was removed they began to ache, and the ends became so painful, from the returning blood, that for several minutes she could not use them to cut the other bonds which restrained her. Finally, by bending and straightening them, and clapping her hands together, she got them so far restored that she was able to work again. The rest was easy enough, and two or three strong cuts with the knife sufficed to divide the straps and cords that still bound her.

And now she was free, and she would have liked to sit down to rest, and to think of what was next to be done. But she had already consumed an hour of precious time,

and in another hour her enemies would be upon her. She therefore did not stop to rejoice or reflect, but, hurrying into her own room, made up a bundle of clothes, wrapping her book up carefully among them, and then, throwing a blanket over her shoulders, she left the house.

It was then nearly dark, and she had not yet fully determined where to go. She had almost made up her mind to seek protection at Hellbender, for the people there were more civilized than those at The Cañon, and hence more likely to give her shelter. But she reflected that she knew no one in the place except Doctor Willis, and that it would take her at least five hours to get there. Still, there was nothing better for her to do, so she took the path that led up the *mesa*, the same one she had followed when she went to return the book to Tyscovus, and was soon deep in the woods that skirted the open plain upon which stood the cabin at Bighorn Spring.

The darkness, that every moment became more intense, was a great impediment to her distinguishing the path, and she several times lost her way. But she was well acquainted with the general direction that she had to take, and eventually arrived at the top of the table-land forming one of the sides of the "Little Cañon." Over this she sped, and then down its steep decline till she arrived at the bottom of the ravine. Then, feeling that she had gotten the start of her enemies, who even yet could scarcely have arrived at the cabin she had left, and being very tired, she sat down on a large bowlder, to rest and to think.

It will doubtless have been perceived by the discriminating and learned reader that Lal Bosler was a young woman of strong mental parts. The few incidents in her life that, previous to the present, we have been able to describe, tended strongly to establish this fact, and the determined contest through which she had just passed, in which, though in the beginning worsted, she had behaved with

valor, and had eventually come out victorious, place the matter, it appears to me, altogether out of the realm of uncertainty. Throughout all the trying incidents of the last few hours she had maintained a clear conception of the situation, and had brought to bear upon it the best work of a naturally good mind, in which strength of will was not the least distinguishing feature. There had been no fainting, no hysterical paroxysms, and no supplications for a mercy that she knew would not be accorded her.

It must have been close on to nine o'clock when she sat down on the bowlder to rest and to decide definitely on her future movements. She felt comparatively safe, for, even if pursued in the direction she had taken, it would be the easiest thing in the world for her to conceal herself behind a rock, or a tree, or in a dark part of the ravine, till her pursuers had passed. But she had yet a long journey before her ere she could arrive at Hellbender, and there were two roads, either of which was open to her, though one was probably two miles shorter than the other.

The one crossed the "Little Cañon" in which she then was, ascended the *mesa* on the other side, traversed the flat table-land, and then struck the wagon-road that connected Hellbender with Bullion City. It was shorter than the other, but far more difficult.

This latter went down the "Little Cañon" and joined the road from Bill Dodd's Cañon to Hellbender, at the butte; it being the identical one that Lal had taken a few days previously, when she had made her visit to Tyscovus. It was a far easier road than the other, though as we have said somewhat longer. After a little reflection, she determined to take it. "I'll see the place onst more whar he lives," she said, "though like as not it's the last time, for, in course, I've got to git away from these parts forever."

Having settled this matter, and having rested sufficient-

ly, she took her bundle in her hand and once more started off on her solitary way.

As the reader probably recollects, the butte was not more than two miles from the point where the path over the *mesa* descended to the bottom of the cañon, and a quarter of a mile of this distance was on the open prairie. Through the ravine Lal had to go very slowly, for, though the moon was shining brightly, it had not yet reached such a height in the heavens as to enable its light to come into the cañon, so that it was difficult for her to find her way. Several times she fell over fallen trees and big stones, but in general she got along very well. Fortunately, there was even less water in Wildcat Creek than there was when she crossed it several days before. Once or twice she stepped into the water and wet her feet, but this was of no consequence, as the exercise, though the night was cold, kept them warm enough.

At last, she emerged from the cañon, and stood on the broad prairie, the full moon shining upon her in all its glory, and the butte standing directly in front, looking like an immense bowl turned upside down. Here the path forked, one branch leading to the right and directly to the butte, the other going to the left and joining the main road from The Cañon to Hellbender. It was this that she designed taking.

But, before going farther on her toilsome way, she stood looking anxiously at the frowning mass of rock before her, so close, that it seemed as though she could touch it with her outstretched hand. The moon lit up the top sufficiently to enable her to distinguish the cabin she knew so well, and even to see the tall pine-tree which, as we know, Tyscovus had that very day, after condemning it to destruction, finally rescued from Abe Wilkins's axe. "Was *he* thar?" she asked herself. She laid her bundle down, and, with her hands clasped together, continued to gaze at the

black, shadowy mass that stood upon the flat summit of the butte. There was no light visible, but, even had there been one in the house, she would not have been able to see it from where she stood, as the window of the room that Tyscovus occupied was on the other side, and the door, opening as it did upon the passage-way, was also cut off from her line of sight.

"I hope as the angels is watchin' him," she said, and for the first time that day the tears started to her eyes. "I hope as every star as is shinin' is a angel watchin' over him."

Oh, if she could now pour out her sorrows into his gracious ear, and hear the words of comfort which she knew would come! But that was impossible. She was going away. He would have other things to think of, other persons, perhaps, to soothe with his sympathizing words. She picked up her bundle, and then, giving a last look at the cabin, turned away toward the road that led to Hellbender.

She had taken but a few steps in the new direction, when she thought she heard the noise of horses' hoofs behind her, and, stopping to listen, was sure that she was not deceived. The circumstance was one calculated, in the then existing state of affairs, to cause her considerable apprehension. She was very certain that, on discovering her flight, Bosler and Kittle, would endeavor to find her, and that her safety depended, not so much on the rapidity with which she could get over the ground, as on their ignorance of the direction she had taken. Her first idea was to run as fast as she could; her next, to turn off from the road, and, lying down in the grass, wait for the rapidly approaching party to pass, before she continued her journey. She had scarcely gone fifty feet, when a light wagon, drawn by two horses, dashed by at full speed. So rapidly did it pass her, that she was unable to see whether it contained one or two persons, and in a few seconds it was out of sight.

What was she to do now? There was no reason for her to suppose that the one or more occupants of the vehicle had any designs against her. It was a common enough event for wagons to be driven over the road between The Cañon and Hellbender, and often at a great rate of speed, especially where the road was as hard as was that particular stretch of a mile or so on each side of the butte. She, therefore, dismissed all idea of danger to herself, from the incident, and started forward on her way.

But she had gone only a few steps when she again heard the sound of horses' hoofs striking the hard earth, but this time coming from the opposite direction. Again she turned off from the road, stooping down as low as possible in order to diminish the chances of being observed. On came the horses, the driver lashing them with his whip, and urging them with emphatic exclamations to their utmost power of speed. But, when he arrived at a point opposite to where she sat, he drew up his team with a suddenness that threw the animals on their haunches. A cloud had at that instant passed over the moon, but, as well as Lal could make out, it was the same wagon that had passed by scarcely three minutes previously.

She was beginning to wonder why it had stopped just at that point, when, to her consternation, two men leaped from it, and engaged in a hurried whispering in which she had no difficulty in detecting the accents of alarm. Suddenly one of them turned toward the horses he had been driving, and gave them several severe cuts with his whip. Away started the frightened animals with all the speed of the wind, and the two men, one of whom she had already recognized as the one that she had declared she would never again regard as her father, ran rapidly away from the road, passing within a few feet of her, but in their evident panic not perceiving her as she lay at full length on the ground.

But the commotion was not to come to an end with the

dashing away of the horses and wagon, for, while she could still hear the noise they made in their headlong flight, under the stimulus of the whip and a loose rein, she also heard the pattering of horses' hoofs approaching from the same direction as the two men had last come, and in a few moments a dozen or more horsemen rushed by in a full gallop, apparently in pursuit of the vehicle that had just been turned loose, and almost at the same instant a series of loud yells, such as only a prairie or mountain man can give, rose on the air from a point farther down the road.

And now Lal was terrified, and for a moment she lost her presence of mind, but it was only for a moment. She soon began to think logically, and quickly arrived at a solution of the several occurrences that had interrupted her on her journey to Hellbender. The men in the wagon were Bosler and Kittle. They had probably been on their way to or from Bighorn Spring, when they were intercepted by the vigilance committee. It was then, that, diverted from their original destination, they had turned toward Hellbender, but intending probably to take a branch road to Bullion City, where they were less likely to be known than at the former place. They had not gone far on their way past the place where Lal stood, when they discovered that the road was guarded, and that escape in that direction was impossible. They had then turned back, but, knowing that the party that had first intercepted them was in full pursuit, they had deserted the wagon, whipped up the horses in order to deceive their enemies into the idea that they were still in full flight, and had then attempted to secure safety by retreating to the "Little Cañon." As to the yells, they appeared to her to have come from the body of men from which the two fugitives had first fled, and to announce the capture of the runaway horses.

It did not take Lal long to arrive at this explanation. Her associations had been such as to make her familiar

with the devices of officers of the law, vigilance committees, and fugitives, and hence she had been able to comprehend the matter as soon as some of the chief circumstances were known to her.

Clearly her own position was critical. She was alone on the prairie, surrounded by determined men in pursuit of others that they meant to hang if they succeeded in catching them. That the search would be continued for a long time yet, and in part over the very ground on which she stood, was not a matter for doubt.

It was scarcely possible, therefore, if she continued on her way as she had intended, that she would escape contact with these people, and, what was worse, there was more than a mere possibility that the two fugitives, driven like hunted rats from one refuge to another, might come across her. The butte was there looming up in the light of the moon, dark and gloomy-looking, but containing for her all the elements of safety. There was no other place to which she could go. She would creep quietly up the hill and endeavor to get into the room which was unoccupied. Then, before the sun was up, she would resume her journey, and he would never know that she had been under his roof.

She was acquainted with every foot of the country, and, making a little *détour* that brought her to the path that led up the steep side of the knoll, she slowly—for she was well-nigh worn out with excitement and fear and fatigue—began the ascent.

It was painful work for one so tired, but she had not lost courage, and, moreover, was sustained by the consciousness that the end was near at hand, and that, once reached, her toil would for a time at least be over. Sometimes she stopped to rest, and again to listen, and then she heard the noise made by numerous horsemen as they passed by the butte, some going one way and some another. She could

even see their shadowy forms as they hurried here and there in every direction over the plain below.

Step by step, each moment fearing that she would be utterly exhausted, she climbed the steep side of the hill. She passed the big pine-tree, and then the bowlder on which Tyscovus had stood when he turned to look at the country below. On she went, her weary limbs tottering under her, her heart beating like a sledge-hammer with the extraordinary work to which it was being subjected, and her breath coming hurriedly and painfully. Her bundle of clothes, light though it was, was more than she could now carry, so she sat down on the ground, and, opening the package, took out the book, which she placed in the bosom of her frock, and then putting the rest between two big rocks where she could find it again in the morning, resumed her weary march.

There was still much hurrying of men on foot and on horseback over the prairie, and occasionally shouts and exclamations reached her ears, but she went on, not paying much heed to them, for she was now close to the top, and in a few moments would be safe, when she heard a sound different from the others, and one that caused her to stop and to look back down the path over which she had passed. A man was coming up the hill rapidly, and in his haste was dislodging stones from their resting-places, which, as they rolled down the steep incline, made the noise she had heard. He was quickly approaching her. That was all she saw. She turned once more, and, inspired by the terror that had taken possession of her, she sprang up the ascent with a degree of speed that would have been impossible to her in her days of greatest strength and freshness. She reached the top, and, still hurrying forward, ran up the steps leading to the passage-way. A tall figure stood in front of her, apparently barring the way to further progress. She could not see his face, but she knew it was

he. She tried to speak, but the words she would have uttered failed to pass her lips. She heard her name called as he ran toward her, as though eager to clasp her to his heart ere her strength should fail. She held out both hands to him, as though imploring his aid. Again she tried to speak as she heard the term of endearment he applied to her, but only a low moan escaped her lips, and then she fell senseless to the floor.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE DESTINY OF THE PINE-TREE.

TYSCOVUS stooped to raise the fainting girl in his arms so that he could carry her into the house. She seemed to him, at first, to be lifeless, but at last he detected the feeblest possible throbbings of the pulse at her wrist, and then he knew that she was saved, and that a few hours' repose would make her all right again. He carried her into his room and laid her on the only bed he possessed. Then he opened a little medicine-chest which he had, and took from it a vial containing a ruby-colored liquid. He poured out a teaspoonful of the fluid, and, mixing it with a little water, succeeded in getting Lal to swallow it, though she was still insensible. While he was doing these things, he heard noises of scuffling and loud conversation on the plateau, together with smothered exclamations delivered with abnormal energy, but he was too busy with more important business to give much heed to what was going on outside. His first interest lay with the helpless girl, stretched out senseless before him. But the sounds of altercation became more notable, and as he was putting the last spoonful of the reviving medicine to Lal's pale lips, a man dashed into the room, and, making for the window, attempted to escape by that opening. He was too late, however, for ere he could raise the sash—and, perhaps, had he been in a reflective mood at the time, he might have cursed the bad carpentery mentioned in the first chapter of this book—he was

seized by half a dozen men, whose faces were covered with black crape, and in an instant was bound securely hand and foot and deposited on the floor.

"This time, I guess, Jim, thar's bin no mistake," said a voice that Tyscovus did not recognize. "Pick him up, boys—thar's use for him outside."

"What is the meaning of all this?" said Tyscovus, with some indignation; "what do you mean by entering my house in that violent way?"

"Well, now, captain," said the man who had spoken, "ef Jim here hadn't 'a' entered it a darned sight more violenter than us, we'd 'a' kep clar of it all night. Howsemever, we begs your pardon. We don't mean no harm to you, nor the lady neither," glancing toward the bed, "but you see Jim's led us a darned long chase."

"Well, now that you have caught him," interrupted Tyscovus, "leave him in my charge, and to-morrow you can come and get him, and deliver him up to the authorities to be tried according to law for any crimes he may have committed."

"I don't think that's exactly the bill, captain," said the voice. "Still, thar's no tellin' till the rest of the boys comes up." He whispered for a moment with another of the men, and then the latter left the room, and three loud blasts of a bugle rang out on the night air.

"That'll fetch 'em up, captain, and then we'll see what's to be done; but I guess I kin tell you about as near the truth as you'll git it from the jedge himself."

"I shall not allow you to take that man from this house to-night, unless you pledge yourselves that you will deliver him at the jail in Hellbender."

"Now, captain, I guess thar ain't none of the boys as would keer to run ag'in you, but I'm morally sartin that Jim'll swing this night, and that within a half-hour."

While this conversation was going on, the captive lay

panting on the floor; his eye was closed most of the time, but occasionally he opened it stealthily and looked at the speakers as though interested, as he doubtless was, in the discussion; but he never uttered a word, apparently convinced that nothing he could say would add any strength to the arguments or assertions of either of the disputants.

"Come, boys," said the man who acted as spokesman, "we ain't got no right to bother the captain with the likes o' Jim Bosler. Pick him up and carry him outside till the fellows gits up."

"You shall not touch him if I can prevent you," said Tyscovus, advancing toward the prostrate man till he stood over the body. "This is my house, and I order you to leave it immediately. I will take care of this man till to-morrow morning, and will then deliver him into your hands as he is now. You seem to be friendly to me, and to be governed by some good notions, but you are yourselves violating the law, and you are trespassers—yes, worse than that—on my property."

"Captain, this is too ridic'lous," exclaimed the spokesman, in sorrowful tones. "We don't want no row with you, but I guess we've got to take Jim. You see, we don't want you to be incommoded by such a all-fired mean cuss as Jim. Ef you knowed that man, captain," he continued, in an argumentative tone, "as we knows him, you'd be willin' to lay him in among a lot o' prairie-dog holes, so as the rattlesnakes mought go for him. That's the sort of a cuss Jim Bosler is.—Pick him up, boys, and don't let's bother the captain any longer."

Three or four of the men stepped forward to obey the order, when Tyscovus drew his pistol and pointed it at the one in advance of the others. "If you come another inch I'll kill you!" he said, calmly, but with a degree of determination that showed how earnest he was.

"I guess you won't, captain," said the man, with the

utmost coolness, while he looked fixedly at some point over Tyscovus's left shoulder; "for, you see, afore you could move a finger on that trigger, you'd have a bullet in your own heart."

Instinctively, Tyscovus turned, and at the same instant the man sprang forward and knocked the pistol out of his hand. It fell far away, and was secured by one of the men, as the others rushed toward him, and, while two of them held Tyscovus, the rest carried Jim Bosler out of the room.

"I begs your parding, captain, for foolin' you. It's a old trick, but you see I had to do it. Orders has got to be obeyed."

Tyscovus was beaten. He saw that, in all probability, nothing that he could do would be of the least avail in saving Bosler's life, but he resolved, nevertheless, to make a further attempt. Yet, before following the men, he turned to look at Lal. She was still insensible, but her pulse had risen, her breath came softly, yet regularly and full, and a little color had appeared on her face. Her hands were folded peacefully across her breast, her eyes were closed, and the long black eyelashes rested on her cheeks, undisturbed by the slightest motion. He thought she was very beautiful, and again he thanked God that he had been able to save her. Had he known the whole truth, he would have been still more grateful to Providence for having given him the opportunity of affording her a refuge.

For Tyscovus imagined that the vigilance committee had attacked Jim Bosler in his house, and that this individual with his daughter had succeeded in making their escape and reaching the butte together, closely followed by their implacable and determined pursuers. He knew nothing of Jim's heartless treatment of Lal, and of his departure for The Cañon to bring Luke Kittle to consummate the vile bargain he had made. Had he been aware of the

circumstances, while he would doubtless have been fully as energetic in protesting against the lawless acts of the vigilance committee, he certainly would not have allowed any feeling of compassion for the wretch to have mingled itself with his convictions. With another look at Lal, to see that all was going well with her, he went out of the house. And here a strange sight met his eyes, for fifty or more men, all armed with rifles, or revolvers, or both, and with their faces concealed by black crape, stood in a circle around two men bound and seated on the ground. One of them was Jim Bosler; the other Tyscovus had never seen before. He was not, however, suffered to remain long in doubt relative to his identity, for a large, powerfully built man made his way into the inclosed space, and said in a clear, full voice, amid the most profound silence:

"Let the prisoners stand up." Four men stepped into the inclosure, and two, taking hold of each of the captives, raised them to their feet.

"James Bosler and Luke Kittle," said the man, in a voice full of solemnity, "you are accused before this court of sundry high crimes against the people of this Territory. Into all of these outrages it is not the purpose of the court to inquire. You will be required to plead to only one each. You, James Bosler, to the allegation that on the 9th day of August last, at Bill Dodd's Cañon, in Costilla County, you murdered a man named Thomas Hallam; and you, Luke Kittle, that on the 10th of the present month, at the town of Hellbender, in said county, you murdered one Manuel Vaca.—James Bosler," he continued, while not a sound was heard safe the swift, hissing noise occasionally caused by the flaring of the torches which several of the men carried, "what have you to say to the charge against you?"

Bosler looked around the group like a caged wolf in search for an opening through which he might escape.

His face, which was lit up by the light of several pine-knot torches held near him, was as pale as a sheet, and he looked haggard and worn. Apparently, he had made up his mind that there was no hope, for he cast his one eye upon the ground and muttered:

"I don't s'pose it's worth while to say ary a word."

"You can say what you please," said the leader of the vigilance committee. "If you deny the crime of which you are accused, witnesses will be sworn for the prosecution, and for you also, if you have any; and they shall be allowed to come and go freely."

"I kin say this, that I'd drunk more whisky than was good for me, and it made me rickless. If it hadn't 'a' bin for that, I wouldn't 'a' drawed on the man."

"Is that all you've got to say?"

"Yes, jedge, I guess that's about all, and thar ain't no use a-sayin' that."

"Gentlemen of the court of the vigilance committee, you have heard what the prisoner James Bosler has said in his defense. How say you, is he guilty or not guilty?"

"Stop!" cried Tyscovus, before an answer could be given—"I claim the right to be heard; and, in a matter involving the life of a fellow-being, wicked, criminal, and degraded as that being may be, you will not refuse me."

"Go on," said the judge.

"I am not here to extenuate this man's crimes. Doubtless they are as bad as is possible, and I admit at once that he is by his own confession guilty of the murder now charged against him. But, men of Colorado, you are living under a constitutional government, in a Christian land; you have the inestimable privilege of making your own laws; you can take this man to the county jail, and there have him kept in safety till he can be tried under legal forms, and with the guarantees against injustice that the courts afford. There is no pretense that the tribunals are not open to you;

you only allege that there may be a possibility of escape, either by a rescue, or through some legal quibble. Well, my friends—for, though I do not identify any one of you, I am sure some of you are my friends—" ("That's so! that's so!" from several parts of the crowd)—"it were better for the fair fame of Colorado that this miserable man should escape all penalties for his crimes, than that you should, in cold blood, with calmness and deliberation, place the sin and crime of his murder on your immortal souls. I do not plead for him; I plead for you that are my friends and neighbors, and I implore you not to sully your consciences with this man's death. If, regardless of my prayer, you take his life, you will commit an act of anarchy worse than any he has committed, and you will be just as guilty of the sin against Heaven and the crime against the State, as was he when he slew the man for whose death you are now demanding vengeance."

"Gentlemen of the court!" said the unknown. (Something in the tone of his voice excited Tyscovus's attention. Surely he had heard it before! But where? The form was too tall for that of the doctor, and the language employed too grammatical for that of Colonel Brattle or Mr. Higgins, or any other of the Hellbender people he had met. But certainly he had heard that voice somewhere before.)

"Gentlemen of the court! You have heard what our friend has said in regard to this matter. I need scarcely say that every word that falls from his lips, on this or any other subject, is worthy of the fullest consideration. I know him better than he thinks I do, and I know that he admits the divine right of revolution against tyrants, and of the people to protect themselves against the violence even of those who act in the name of the law. His native land, Poland, fairest among the nations of the earth, is prostrate, with the heel of the tyrant on her throat! Would he not take, has he not already taken, arms against the oppressor, even

though the despot acted under the forms of the law? My friends, I saw him once, single-handed, resist a dozen soldiers armed to the teeth, that came to arrest his friend on the charge of conspiracy; and yet these minions of the Czar acted under the law, and were only obeying their instructions.

"I cite these facts merely to show that there are two sides of the question. The best proof of the necessity for prompt action in this case is, that James Bosler is known to have deliberately murdered eleven persons, besides being strongly suspected of killing his wife, and that thus far the law, to which our friend appeals so eloquently, has utterly failed to rid us of this wolf in human form, who kills our citizens whenever he sees fit to do so!

"But, gentlemen, the matter is for you to determine; and again I ask you is the prisoner, James Bosler, guilty or not guilty of the crime of which he is accused?"

For a moment there was a silence so complete that Tyscovus could hear the beating of his heart, as he waited for the verdict, and then one single cry of "Guilty!" broke the stillness.

"Gentlemen, as you know, there is but one punishment awarded by this court, and it is, therefore, unnecessary to ask your instructions relative to the sentence to be imposed in this case. Still, that our friend here may understand that I am not acting on my sole responsibility, I put the question. What sentence shall be passed upon James Bosler, adjudged guilty of the murder of Thomas Hallam?"

"Once more," exclaimed Tyscovus, "I beg you to pause. The power of life or death does not rest in your hands: this is a lawless assembly; you are bringing disgrace on your country, on yourselves, on your children. O my friends, think before you send this man into the presence of his Maker with all his sins upon his head!"

"Yes, it is a lawless assembly," resumed the unknown;

"the power of life or death is in our hands illegally, and only because we are the stronger party. If the criminal were the more powerful, he would hang us. But it is well to do all things upon reflection, especially when the life of a human being is at stake. The court is adjourned for five minutes, in order that you may confer with one another in regard to your intention. In the mean time," turning to the guards, "watch the prisoners closely."

Tyscovus felt that he could do nothing now in the way of saving Jim Bosler's life, but there was still a hope that there might be some difference of opinion among the members of the committee. He therefore spoke a few words, urging them to send Bosler out of the country or to deliver him to the authorities at Hellbender, and then entered the house to look after Lal.

He found her lying quietly where he had left her and apparently sleeping. Her face was slightly flushed, however, and her pulse was so full and strong that at first he thought she had fever. He placed his hand on her forehead, but could not discover that her skin was more than naturally warm. Doubtless, she was passing through the stage of reaction, and when she awoke would be comparatively well. He determined, nevertheless, that he would send at once to Chetolah for Doctor Willis, and then he joined the party out on the plateau.

But who was this man, the leader and judge, who appeared to know so much about him, and whose voice he had certainly heard before? At one moment it seemed to him as though he had heard it only a day or two ago, and again as though years had elapsed. There was nothing about the figure of the man that he could recognize. His face, like that of all the others, was entirely concealed by the black crape he wore, and over his shoulders was a long, black cloak that completely enveloped his form. Clearly, he was a man of education and great force of character.

But, while he was in the house, an idea had struck him which, if carried out, might be successful in saving, for the present at least, Jim Bosler's life. He would make one last appeal on behalf of the sick girl, for whose sake these men might yet consent to spare the father. It might be better, perhaps, to speak privately with this man, who seemed to have the power of swaying the others in accordance with his wishes. He, therefore, sought him out, and found him standing alone on the outskirts of the crowd.

"I do not know who you are," said Tyscovus; "you appear, however, to know me, and I perceive, by your speech and manners, that you are a gentleman. I come now to make a last appeal to you for that man's life. His daughter, in escaping from your men, sought safety here; she lies in that room insensible. Think of her anguish when she awakes, and finds that you have killed her father!"

"Thank God that she is here!" he exclaimed, under his breath. Then to Tyscovus: "We feared she might still be wandering about in the night. I have half the committee looking for her in the 'Little Cañon' and on the plain."

"Yes, she is safe, and resting quietly."

The unknown pressed Tyscovus's hand as he said:

"Mr. Tyscovus, I appreciate to its utmost all you say, but you must allow me, with all respect and kindness, to observe that you know nothing of what you are talking about. Nevertheless, if, before we proceed to extremities with this wretch, you can honestly come to me and renew that plea, I promise you to save the fellow's life, even if I have to sacrifice my own to do it. Now I must go, for the time has more than expired."

"Gentlemen," he said, entering the circle and taking the position he had previously occupied, though his voice trembled a little now, "have you deliberated on your sentence?"

"We have!" from every man.

"What punishment shall be inflicted on James Bosler?"

"Death by hanging!" uttered as by one voice.

"If there is any one of you who dissents from this sentence, let him raise his hand and we will hear what he has to say."

Not a hand was raised.

"Your sentence, then, is unanimous?"

"It is."

"Then, James Bosler," turning to the man as he spoke, "you will be immediately hanged by the neck till you are dead, and may God have mercy on your soul! If you have anything to say before your execution, say it now, for this is the only opportunity you will have, and it may be that I shall feel compelled to ask you a few questions."

"Thar's only one thing as I keer to talk about," said Jim, "and then I guess I'm ready to go. I'd like to ask about a gal as I seen comin' up the butte ahead o' me."

"You mean your daughter?" asked the unknown. "She is here, in safety."

"Yes, she's the one as I means. I'd like, jist for cur'osity's sake, to know how she got here, for you see, when I left Bighorn, to go for Luke Kittle, she war tied so tight, that I couldn't 'a' loosed her myself, without a knife."

Tyscovus at these words came closer so that nothing should escape him. What did it mean? What new mystery was this?

"You had her tied, then?"

"Yes, in course I tied her, so as she couldn't git away, for you see Luke here give me five thousand dollars, and I was to git five thousand more for makin' her marry him, and the weddin' was to 'a' come off to-morrow at three o'clock—wan't it, Luke?"

"Mind your own business, damn you!" said that indi-

vidual, angrily, "and don't be bringing me into your affairs. What's the girl to do with the matter, anyhow?"

Jim, on the principle that a drowning rat catches at straws, thought he might possibly, by concentrating ill-feeling on Luke Kittle, lessen that existing against himself; so he told the whole story of his interview with "The Gulcher," but with many extenuations of his own conduct. Then he related how he had been compelled, through fear, to endeavor to bring Lal to consent to the marriage, and, not succeeding by mild means, had, still under fear for his life, and knowing that Kittle had spies all around him, been obliged to use force; but that now he was glad she had got away, and that he and Kittle had been captured before they could find her, after her escape from Bighorn Spring. "You see, gentlemen," he said, "if it hadn't 'a' bin for Luke Kittle, thar wouldn't 'a' bin no trouble about Lal. Thar's his five thousand dollars over at Bighorn, in a hole behind the chimley. I don't want it; nothin' would make me take it; I ain't that sort of a man as to sell my daughter when I kin act free."

"Is she your daughter?"

"Is she my daughter? Well, now, gentlemen, do you s'pose as I'd be such a blamed fool as to bring up another man's daughter, and spend my money on her jist as ef it war water?"

"Answer the question, and remember you are standing on the brink of the grave! Is she your daughter?" Then, looking toward a man who stood a little in front of the rest, the unknown continued, "Number Nine, step forward!"

The person addressed advanced till he stood about a yard from Jim.

"Now," resumed the judge, "is she your daughter?"

Jim hesitated for a moment. He looked inquiringly and apprehensively at the man designated as "Number Nine," but his face was also covered with crape, and his

form was enveloped in a long cloak, and he stood erect, without moving a muscle or speaking a word. But evidently Jim perceived that there was a potentiality in this person which, if roused into activity, might convict him of lying, for he turned with his old suave manner to his interrogator, while he said in his blandest and humblest tones:

"Well, jedge, now as you speaks serious, it ain't in me to tell no lies. I'm a squar' man, jedge, and tharfore I'm bound to say as the gal ain't no daughter o' mine, though I raised her from a infant, and keered for her jist the same as ef she war my own child. You jist ask her now," he continued with more energy, for he thought he saw another straw, "ef I haven't done the squar' thing by her up to the time when Luke Kittle stepped in and made me act like a fool."

"You dirty whelp!" exclaimed "The Gulcher," in a tone of unmitigated contempt, while he made a gesture with his fingers as though he would like to have Mr. Bosler's throat in his clutches.

"It's the gospil truth, Luke, as you knows well," continued Jim, in his most plaintive voice.—"That's the sort of a man Luke is, gents. Thar ain't no reasonin' with him, and I was jist a-feared as he'd kill Lal some day.

"Well, as I was sayin', jedge, my wife and me always treated the gal jist the same as ef she war our own flesh and blood. My wife's dead and gone now, gentlemen, but, ef she war here, she'd up and tell you the truth. We got so at last that we jist thought she war our'n. We didn't know no deference, and she never knowed neither. You see we had her nigh on to seventeen year, I guess. But now, as I'm on my word, jedge and gents, in course I'm bound to say as she ain't no daughter o' mine."

During the delivery of this speech Tyscovus had stood like a dazed man, but at the last words he sprang toward Bosler.

"What did you say?" he exclaimed—"not your daughter! My God! is this true?"

"That's exactly what I said, and it's the gospil truth. She's bin jist the same as ef she war my gal. I done my best for her. You kin tell the jedge that, for you seen us a-livin' together like Dan'el in the lion's den when you come to buy the butte.—It's the Good Man's truth, gents; ef it ain't, you kin call me a liar, and when Jim Bosler says that he means it. You kin jist fetch her out here, and she'll tell you the same. She don't lie; fetch her out, gents. She's the only witness as I've got."

He uttered these last words in a despairing sort of a way, but no one moved, and Jim continued as though his only chance of life depended on Lal's evidence: "For the love of God, jedge, fetch her out! She'll tell you as I've always treated her good. She won't stand by and see the man as has bin a father to her for seventeen years jerked out of his life, and jist for a'most nothin'."

"You are not on trial," said the unknown, "for your conduct to the poor girl that you have passed off as your daughter—but it is well to remind you that your first and last acts toward her were of such cruelty as to place you almost beyond the pale of humanity—but you have been tried and found guilty, after much deliberation, by the court, of the crime of murdering Thomas Hallam, and for that you are to die. The poor child who lies ill, insensible, in that room, is so by your vile deeds, as your own confession shows. If she were to appear as a witness, her testimony would still further inflame the hearts of all honest men against you. There is evidence in my possession to show that you have for many years looked forward to selling her to the highest bidder. You offered her to Manuel Vaca—oh! you did not think I knew that!" as Bosler started—"for ten thousand dollars, and you sold her to this man"—turning toward "The Gulcher"—"for that

sum. Moreover, she can not come, for, as I have said, she is ill, and to be exposed to additional excitement now might kill her. James Bosler, you have said nothing that can be considered as entitling you to mercy.—Let the sentence of the court be executed!"

"For Heaven's sake, one moment!" cried Tyscovus, rushing before the men who advanced to seize Bosler. Then, turning to that individual, who saw that his last moments had come, and who had gotten into a dogged frame of mind, he continued:

"Standing, as you do, on the brink of the grave, I ask you, whose daughter is she?"

Jim looked at him; a sardonic smile passed over his face. "You'd like to know, wouldn't you? Well, you kin ask the jedge thar. He 'pears to know more about it nor any one else. Perhaps he'll tell you!"

"Yes," said the unknown, turning to Tyscovus, "I will tell you. She is my daughter!"

"Your daughter!" exclaimed Tyscovus.

"Your'n!" said Bosler.

"Yes, mine. This man stole her from me more than sixteen years ago, and sent her poor mother to an untimely grave. She never smiled after the loss of her child.—Take him away, men," he continued, "and execute the sentence! Number Two," he went on, "preside over the court while the other prisoner is being tried.—And you, Number Nine," addressing the man who had remained standing, as though waiting to be examined, "mount your horse and ride with all speed to Hellbender, with my request to Doctor Willis to come here immediately." Then, turning to Tyscovus: "Now, my friend, take me to her at once; I owe her life to you!"

He placed his arm within that of Tyscovus, and the two with bowed heads went into the house. He approached the bed on which Lal lay, and stood for a moment gazing

at the child that had been so wonderfully restored to him, his strong form trembling with emotion. Tyscovus stood by, silent in the presence of the father whose rights he felt were superior to his own.

"Yes," said the unknown, as he gently laid his hand on Lal's head, "she has her mother's hair, her mother's face.—Lalage, my darling!" he continued, in a voice scarcely above a whisper, as he knelt by the side of the bed, "at last—at last! After I had ceased to hope! My God! I thank thee for this moment." Then he bent over her, and, raising the crape from the lower part of his face, pressed his lips to her forehead. "She is very ill!" he exclaimed, while he put his fingers on her pulse. "Her skin is quite hot, and she has a high pulse. Poor child! How she has suffered!"

"Yes," said Tyscovus, "but her sorrows are, probably, nearly over. I, too, can thank God that she is not the daughter of that man."

"You have been her friend. I know of all your goodness to her, and I can not find it in my heart to keep my identity longer concealed from you."

As he spoke, he tore off the crape from his face.

"Geoffrey Moultrie!" cried Tyscovus, in astonishment. "Good God! is it possible? Ah! now I understand the resemblance that I discovered the first day I saw you, and which was then a mystery to me. Yes, you are her father. She is like you."

"I am her father; ask me for no explanations now; tomorrow I will explain all to you. In the mean time, all my thoughts are with her. She may yet be very ill."

"It is only the fever of reaction. She was utterly exhausted when she reached here. Think of all that she has gone through, and you will understand that she may be weak and feverish for several days."

"I will sit by her side, and watch her till the doctor

comes. He can scarcely get here under two hours. I am afraid to waken her, and yet I long to hear her call me 'father,' and to clasp her to my heart."

They had been in the house scarcely half an hour. Tyscovus went to the door and looked out. The moon was shining brightly in a cloudless sky, and was now high in the heavens. All was still, and not a man was to be seen. "I will leave him alone with her till the doctor comes," he thought. Then he went out on the plateau. No signs of the recent visitation were to be perceived. "They have gone," he said, as he walked toward the crest of the hill and looked down on the plain. "But, great Heavens! what do I see?" he exclaimed. For there, on the lowest limb of the great pine-tree, not ten feet from where he stood, were the dead bodies of Jim Bosler and Luke Kittle, hanging by the necks, and swinging to and fro in the cold night wind.

CHAPTER XXXII.

"LOOK AT ME AGAIN!"

It was not the next day, nor the day after, nor for several others, that Geoffrey Moultrie told Tyscovus the story of Lal. In the mean time, she had been very ill, being threatened with inflammation of the brain, and suffering from high fever, delirium, and other symptoms of the intense excitement of her mental and physical systems, incident to the events through which she had passed. Theodora, and the doctor, and Mrs. Moultrie, were assiduous in their attentions, and, through the skill of the physician, and the careful nursing of her father, who scarcely ever left her side, and that of the others, she began to recuperate, and on the seventh day was pronounced by the doctor out of all danger, provided no fresh excitement occurred to her.

She had not yet been told of the great change that had taken place in her social relations. She recollected very clearly all the particulars of her escape, and of finding a refuge on the butte. She remembered that Tyscovus had stood before her with extended arms. After that, all was a blank, till on the fourth day she exhibited signs of returning reason. During her delirium she always recognized Tyscovus, and was continually calling his name and mingling it with ideas which, though incoherently expressed, gave evidence of what was passing in her mind. Little by little, existing circumstances were explained to her. She thus knew where she was. She soon got to know Theo-

dora, but several times she looked with surprise at the tall gentleman who was almost always seated by the bedside, and who spoke to her so earnestly and kindly.

And, then, when Tyscovus entered the room, her eyes never left him. She had been told by the doctor not to talk much, and hence she generally contented herself with looking at him. But one day, soon after the return of her reason, she said to him, as he stood by the side of the bed:

"I'd like to speak a little, ef it wouldn't do no harm."

"The doctor is afraid you may become excited if you talk much," said Moultrie, who was in his accustomed place.

"It ain't much as I want to say, and I guess, ef I said it, I'd git it off my mind and be quieter."

"Then speak, dear. Shall I go away while you talk to Mr. Tyscovus?"

"No," with a smile; "thar ain't no secrets 'twixt him and me—'cept one," she added, as she suddenly recollected the incident of the book, "and that ain't what I want to talk about.—You see," she went on, addressing Tyscovus, "I wouldn't like you to think as I come down on you on purpose. I war goin' to Hellbender when I run away, but, when I seen the wagon go by, and then come back, and the men jump out, and heered the shouts, and seen all the rest on 'em ridin' by like mad, I got skeered, and I didn't know whar to go, onless I come to you as war kind to me onst afore. That's why I come. I guess I oughtn't to 'a' done it, for I know I've bin a heap o' trouble. But you see I war awful skeered."

"My poor child, you were right to come. How could you think you would be any trouble to me?"

"I didn't know," she said, timidly; "but I'll soon be well ag'in, and then I'll go away."

"No, dear," said Moultrie, unable longer to restrain himself, "you shall never leave us again."

"Never ag'in?"

"Never again. Your home is with us now."

"I don't think I understand."

"Very soon you shall know all. But now you are fatigued, and you must not talk any more."

"Thar's only one thing more, and then I guess I'm done. Did them men git away?"

"They are gone," said Moultrie, justifying the reservation of the full truth by the necessities of the case. "They will never harm you again."

A sense of blissful repose was expressed on her countenance. She closed her eyes, and was silent for several minutes. Then she said:

"I'm glad as they got away. He was very hard on me—oh, yes, very hard; but, afore that, he used to be kind to me, and for that I'm glad as he warn't ketched."

Wearied with the exertion she had made, she fell asleep. The doctor was present when she awoke. She was better, he declared, than she had yet been. "She feels safe now from her enemies," he said. "To-morrow you may tell her all, and then we'll take her to Chetolah."

To-morrow came. She was sitting at the window, looking out over the country she knew so well. The giant pine-tree was before her eyes, but the bodies that had hung there had been removed and buried, after a coroner's jury had rendered a verdict of "death at the hands of persons unknown to the jury." Only Moultrie and Tyscovus were present. The latter perceived that the time for the revelation had come, and, actuated by feelings of delicacy, rose to leave the room; but Moultrie laid his hand on his shoulder. "No, my friend, there is nothing I have to say that you may not hear." Then he went to where Lal sat. She looked up as he approached and held out her hand. "My child," he said, as he clasped it in both his own, "you have wondered who I am?"

"Yes, but I kin wait till you're ready to tell me. I knows as you've nursed me all the time I was sick. Whenever I've looked up, I've seen you. Perhaps you're *his* father, and that's the reason you're so good to me."

He smiled as he said: "Not yet, dear. Look at me again, and tell me who I am."

She raised her eyes to his and gazed searchingly into his face.

"I don't think I know," she said, while her pale face flushed, as though a suspicion of the truth swept through her mind; "did I ever see you afore?"

"Yes, dear, often. I've held you in my arms many times when you were a little baby. Lal, my darling, my child, I am your father!"

She rose from her chair, but would have fallen had he not caught her in his arms.

"My father!" she murmured, scarcely above a whisper.

"Yes!" he exclaimed, kissing her as he folded her to his heart, "your father, who now, after seventeen long years, has found the daughter he thought was lost to him forever."

She lay on his breast, stunned by the force of the wonderful knowledge that had come to her. Then she raised her arms and clasped them about his neck.

"I knowed as you was somethin' dear to me, but I couldn't tell," she said, bursting into a torrent of tears. "How could I? I thought as he was— And she? War she my mother? She war always good to me. She loved me, and I loved her. She's dead now. Yes, I loved her. Perhaps she'd be sorry to find out as I warn't her daughter. Did she know?"

"No, she was not your mother. My darling, your own dear mother died when you were stolen from her; first her reason and then her life faded away.—My friend," turning to Tyscovus, "tell her who I am. She scarcely understands yet."

"Yes," she said, smiling through her tears, "I knows it all now. I'm your child. You are my father. It's all very sudden and very strange, but I knows it's true. My father!" she took his hand, and kissed it fervently, "I never want to go away ag'in."

Tyscovus slipped out of the room, unobserved, and met the doctor just as he was getting out of his gig.

"Well," said the physician, smiling, "is it all right? Have the agonies been gone through with? How did she stand it?"

"It is all right; the agonies were perfect. She stood it like—like—as a woman should, I suppose. Don't go in there," as the doctor was about ascending the steps; "they have not quite settled everything yet, but, when I left, matters were going on swimmingly."

"The carriage will be here in an hour to take the whole party to Chetolah. This affair has interfered with your political engagements, but the election takes place to-morrow, and, as there is no opposition, of course you will go in."

"A pretty way you have here of securing the election of your friends! You hang the opposing candidate. Of course I have written, withdrawing from the contest."

"The devil you have!"

"Certainly I have. I could not consent to go into an office when my own friends have killed my competitor."

For a moment the doctor was silent; then he burst forth:

"Well, of all the hypersensitive, abnormally conscientious and generally ridiculous idiots I ever saw in my life, you take the lead! No, no," he continued, "that's too strong; I don't mean all that. What did you tell me your father called you?"

"'John Buridan's Ass.'"

"My dear fellow, I respect your father; he was a good

man, and one of great discrimination. He could discern a man's characteristics with a degree of certainty that I have never seen excelled. Allow me to congratulate you on having had such a wise progenitor. He is a wise son who knows his own father. He is a wiser father who knows his own son. *Au revoir.* Of course, we shall see you with Moultrie and his new-found daughter at Chetolah this evening. If there was time, I'd get Theodora to take your place. As it is, you'll be elected in spite of yourself. I'm going to The Cañon to settle that matter of Lal's inheritance, though it isn't of much consequence now, I suppose. I'll see you to-night. I'll bring Higgins, and Brattle, and Theodora—yes, and Lal—to bear on you. If you think the freemen of the Fourth Council District are going to be bamboozled by any such damned nonsense as that, you're very much mistaken!" The doctor jumped into his gig with this parting shot, and drove furiously down the hill. "He is the most honest, the bravest, the truest gentleman I ever knew!" he exclaimed, after a few minutes' steady thought; "and I'm a narrow-minded blackguard. I'll go down on my knees to him to-night and beg his pardon."

Tyscovus, the more he reflected on the matter of the election, the more he was convinced that he was perfectly right in declining to have any political association with people who had, notwithstanding his protests, violated the principles that he conceived should govern society. He had no positive means of identifying the men that had convicted, sentenced, and executed Bosler and Kittle, but there was no doubt in his mind that his most strenuous supporters were among them, including such persons as Colonel Brattle and Mr. Higgins. Indeed, as they all came from Hellbender and its neighborhood, he was quite sure that every one of them was an adherent of what was called the "Law and Order party." The doctor, probably, had not been present, but that he sympathized with the high-

handed act they had committed was very clear, and his son-in-law, in expectancy, had been the leader. How Moultrie had so suddenly become transformed, from a man apparently governed by very rigid ideas of the proper constitution of society, into the extra-legal judge of a vigilance committee, was beyond his knowledge. In some way or other it was evident that Bosler's connection with the abduction of his child had been revealed to him, but Tyscovus did not believe that this fact would have caused him to depart from the course that all law-abiding citizens should follow from principle.

The reader will not fail to perceive that, right or wrong, Tyscovus was utterly unable to recognize the fact in its social relations that "desperate diseases require desperate remedies." He admitted, as Moultrie had reminded him, the right of every people to rebel against tyranny. If, at that very moment, he had received information that a conspiracy, with every prospect of success crowning its efforts, was being organized in Poland, he would not have hesitated one moment before giving it his personal support. He knew that nothing is more subservive of law and order than rebellion, yet he countenanced this last resort of an oppressed people, governed by despotic laws, while he reprehended the rising of a people against a criminal class that good laws were powerless to repress. He made no allowance for a condition of affairs under which all countries settled as were California, Colorado and other Western States in the height of the gold-fever must, in the beginning of their careers, exist. In such times the laws are admitted by all good citizens to be powerless.

The fact that one man on a jury can prevent a conviction, however valuable a guarantee of liberty it may be in those communities in which society is thoroughly organized, is conducive to immunity from punishment for crime in States situated as was Colorado in its early days.

Tyscovus could not but admit that the guilt of both Bosler and Kittle was beyond question, and that the good people of the Territory would breathe freer now that they would cause no further trouble. As he subsequently learned, Kittle had pleaded self-defense, but evidence was produced, and, among the rest, a letter written by him, showing that he had gone to Hellbender for the purpose of killing Vaca, in exactly the way in which he had committed the crime. That the execution of both men met with the commendation of the best people of the Territory was beyond doubt. The press had, without exception, approved the action taken; and many public meetings had been held throughout the country, at which the vigilance committee had been congratulated on having rid the community of two desperadoes that the law had been unable to reach.

Still, the conscience of no other man was a guide to Tyscovus; so he had adhered to his declination, in spite of the remonstrances of the doctor, and of a letter he had only a few minutes previously received from the executive committee. He supposed that, if his friends persisted in voting for him, he would be elected, but he conceived that it would be to his lasting disgrace if, under the circumstances, he should take his seat in the Legislature of the Territory. That he should consent to profit by the lawless acts of his friends in hanging his competitor, was an utter impossibility.

During her illness, Tyscovus had shown his anxiety for Lal's restoration to health so openly that no one failed to perceive how deep and true was his attachment. When she fell at his feet, after climbing the butte on that dreadful night, he had felt that the bond between them was never to be severed while either of them lived. It was impossible, now that he knew that she was not the daughter of a horse-thief and murderer, but of a gentleman, that his love could be strengthened. It was already as intense as even

his warm heart was likely to make it, but it was nevertheless a source of great satisfaction to discover that no blood relationship existed between Lal and Jim Bosler.

As he walked to and fro on the plateau after the doctor's departure, he determined that in a few days he would communicate to Moultrie the state of his feelings toward Lal, and formally ask permission to speak to her on the subject. That was the Polish way of proceeding, in all well-regulated families. Then he would go to the girl herself, and tell her how dearly he loved her, and ask her to be his wife. No one was more thoroughly aware of all that was necessary to be done to make her fit to be the wife of a gentleman than was he. Her speech, her manners, her knowledge, were such as would have made each individual hair of his Polish and American relatives stand on end. For which capillary erections, however, Tyscovus would have cared nothing at all. He very well knew that there was a basis of mental and moral excellence in Lal that placed her, in his estimation, far above many princesses and other high-born dames that had paid court to him, and whose blandishments he had resisted. And he also knew that all the defects that grated on refined eyes and ears were such as two or three years of careful education and of association with well-bred people would obliterate. The gem was there in all its beauty. The matrix only, in which it was imbedded, had to be cut away.

As to how she would receive the declaration of his love—while he knew she loved him, he was not altogether sure in regard to the character of her affection. Still, upon reflection, he scarcely thought there was a reasonable doubt on the subject. She was not habituated in the mechanism of concealing the emotions by which she was governed. She could neither control her smiles, the glances of her eyes, nor her blushes, and all these spoke to Tyscovus in a language that he thought he understood. He saw no reason why,

if his intentions were approved by Moultrie, and his affection returned by Lal, the marriage should not take place immediately, or at least as soon as he could build the house on his butte which he contemplated, and which would be necessary before he could settle down with a wife and enjoy the comforts and luxuries to which his wealth and position entitled him. He had definitely resolved to cast his fortunes with Colorado. He had, he believed, cut loose altogether from Europe, and while he might, at times, visit the East, his home should be where he had found his wife.

And, if married at once, how delightful would be the task of educating her in accordance with the views that were to have been inculcated in his great work—a work, alas! that circumstances had caused him to utterly neglect. How great would be his pleasure, as he saw her mind expand daily, hourly, under the lessons that would be to him not only a labor of duty but one of love!

He was in the midst of these reflections, and of many others, born of the circumstances that a few days had crowded into his life, when, hearing some one approach, he turned round, and found that Abe Wilkins was standing within a few feet of him, apparently waiting to be noticed. The man had not come back, as he had promised, when, several days previously, he had gone to The Cañon to enlist his "gang" in Tyscovus's political service, and his employer had wondered what had become of him. Something in the man's attitude attracted his attention, and instantly the truth flashed upon him.

"You were here the other night with the vigilance committee?" he said, with some degree of sternness in his voice.

"Well, ef you says I was, I suppose I was."

"Don't answer me in that way, please. I recognize you distinctly, although you then wore a cloak reaching to your heels. You were standing then exactly as you stand now."

"I ain't got nothin' to say. You kin have it jist as you please."

"You are 'Number Nine.' You stepped forward as the witness against Bosler when he was accused of abducting the girl he called his daughter."

'Captain," said Wilkins, in some confusion, "it ain't for me to say 'yes' or 'no' to that 'ere charge. But you saved my life, and I told you as how I was a-goin' to begin over ag'in and do better nor I've done afore. It ain't much of a life, I guess, but it's somethin' to me, and, sich as it air, I owes it to you. I don't keer to talk about vigilance committees and them things, ef it's all the same to you. I come to see ef you didn't want me to stay here while you're off with the doctor."

"Yes, you can stay."

"Prehaps you wouldn't object ef I was to bring my old woman and the boy. We could all live in t'other room."

"No, I don't object; you can bring your family, if you choose."

"Thank 'ee. Ef thar was anything you'd like me to do now, I kin pitch right in."

"No, there is nothing. Yes, there is," he added, as his eyes rested on the tall, gaunt pine-tree. "Bring your axe and chop down that cursed tree! Then pile all the logs here on the top of the butte and burn them up, so that not a vestige of it will remain. Do it at once. Perhaps, if I had not stopped you when you began the other day to cut it down, those two men might have escaped hanging."

"I guess not, captain. You see it was all up with Jim and Luke from the moment the boys had 'em; and ef it hadn't 'a' bin that tree, it would 'a' bin another. Thar's plenty o' trees in the 'Little Cañon' as would 'a' done, but," he added, surveying the object in question with a critical eye, "none quite as good as that 'ere; and then, you see, it war so mighty handy!"

"Well, cut it down. I never want to see it again. I think they might have spared me the insult, after disregarding my protest, of using my own tree for the purpose of a gallows."

"The jedge war mighty mad, I hear tell," said Wilkins, cautiously, as though afraid of committing himself by possessing too much knowledge. "They do say as he said some pretty hard things ag'in the boys. But, you see, captain, it was so uncommon convenient that I guess they couldn't help tharselves. Howsomever, down she goes, ef you say so."

In a few minutes Wilkins was raining down his heaviest blows with the axe on the trunk of the tree, and shortly afterward it fell with a tremendous crash, that brought Moultrie and Lal to the door. The former at once understood the motive by which Tyscovus was actuated. As the reader knows, he had had nothing to do with the actual work of the execution, and had been, as Wilkins said, highly indignant that the hanging should have been done on the butte.

"It was an outrage," he said, "to do the thing right under your very nose. But I am quite sure it was with no intention of giving offense. It was mere thoughtlessness."

"The outrage was in doing it at all," replied Tyscovus, gravely. "Any personal indignity I can well afford to pardon. It is the insult to the law which I find difficult to forgive. However, it is not likely that we will ever agree on that matter, and I promise never to allude to it again."

While this conversation was going on, Lal had been alternately listening and looking at Wilkins, who was proceeding to cut the limbs and trunk of the prostrate tree into lengths suitable for the fire he proposed to kindle on the butte. He had entered a protest against wasting the wood, which, as he said, would last half a winter as fuel;

but Tyscovus had insisted that no use should be made of it, but that it should be destroyed at the earliest possible moment.

Evidently Lal did not understand the remarks made by her father and Tyscovus, but she comprehended that, for some reason or other satisfactory to both, the old pine-tree, for which she had acquired a friendship based on long association, had been cut down, and was to be utterly expunged from the face of the earth.

"It's about done for now," she said, with a tinge of regret in her voice. "It warn't much for shade, but it looked well for all that, and I'm kinder sorry it's gone."

Both the men were afraid she would ask questions that it would be uncomfortable to answer, and they experienced a feeling of relief when she, looking down the road, perceived the carriage approaching that was to carry them all to Chetolah, and called their attention to the fact that she had some preparations to make. She had kept hold of Moultrie's hand as though fearful that some cause might deprive her of her newly-found father. As she left him to go into the house, she raised it to her lips.

"I'm your Lal, ain't I?" she said, with one of those smiles which more than anything else showed how beautiful she was. Then turning to Tyscovus, she continued: "Do you call to mind when you asked me ef you mought call me Lal, and I said as you mought, for that war my name. Well, you won't have to change a bit, for I'm still Lal, jist the same as afore. I'm glad o' that, for I'd like you to call me by the same name as you did that day."

She was gone before Tyscovus could reply, but Moultrie, turning to him, said:

"Her name is Lalage, but she will always, I trust, be Lal to you. She has told me all about the book. If you could know how grateful I feel to you, it might be some little pleasure to you."

What Tyscovus had to say to Moultrie were better said soon. He did not, therefore, hesitate.

"She is a sweet girl. I love her very much. You are her father, and I ask your consent to tell her what is in my heart."

Moultrie held out his hand to Tyscovus.

"No man lives to whom I would as soon give her as to you; but wait till you have heard what I have yet to tell you of her parentage. And, by-the-by, it will take three persons to relate the story. If, after that, you are of the same mind, and she loves you, I will feel that my happiness, so far as she can affect it, is secure."

Tyscovus grasped his hand as he said:

"I shall not change. I loved her most when her misery was at its height, when she struggled up the butte, fleeing, as she thought, from her pursuers on the night that set her free forever from her past associations. I felt then, as she staggered toward me with outstretched hands, as though she were coming to me never to go away again till death should part us."

"My friend, so far as we are concerned, the matter is settled. Ask Lal. I have no doubt as to what her answer will be. You loved her when you thought her father was a murderer, a horse-thief, and everything else that is vile, because you thought you saw sterling qualities in her that education would develop. "Well," he added after a little pause, "she has them, and they will not, I think, be stunted by the father she has found."

"She has something still more to be prized by you, and by me also, if I am ever to be more to her than I am now—a true heart."

"Yes, that is so. How she ever succeeded in preserving the characteristics she got from her mother, is a mystery to me, surrounded as she was by everything that was wicked and degrading. The germ, however, seems to have

remained ready to spring into activity under proper influences. But, how strange the force was that started it into growth, and how it seems to overturn all our ideas of the fitness of things! She steals your book, and that sin leads to a complete transformation of her moral nature."

"I think you regard the matter from a wrong standpoint," said Tyscovus. "You must go back much further in search of your prime factor. If my ancestor had not been so firm of purpose as to have suffered a frightful martyrdom for his right of private judgment, no one would have taken the trouble to write his life. There would have been, therefore, no such book as the one she picked up from the ground—a very mild form of theft at the worst—and consequently she would not have received the lessons in morality which it inculcates. Besides, God often makes use of sin to effect a radical change in the conduct of those whose hearts, being inherently right, appear to require, from the very strength and vigor of their organizations, a shock so strong that weak systems would go down before it. St. Paul was on his way to persecute the followers of Christ, when he was converted. I feel that my ancestor did not live and die in vain."

"Ah!" answered Moultrie, gravely, "you know more of these things than I do; but here is the carriage"—as a landau was driven up to the plateau—"that is to take us to Chetolah.—Come, my child, are you ready?" opening the door as he spoke. "I will call you 'Lal' after a while," he continued as she came out dressed for the drive as well as her rather limited wardrobe allowed. "At present I think of you always as my child."

Again she took his hand and kissed it.

"How did you learn that pretty European caress of children for their parents?" he said, smiling, as he put his arm around her waist.

"From my book," she answered; "I seen as all the

children of Count John kissed his hand, whenever he said anything good to 'em, and you're always sayin' good things to me; and so I have to kiss your hand very often."

"There is another reason, I suspect, my dear."

"Because I love you?"

"Yes, that of course, but there is still another reason."

"I don't know," she said, reflectively; "tell me."

"Because your mother was a Pole, and you are like her in every feature of your face, in every gesture, in every tone of your voice."

"Her mother a Pole!" exclaimed Tyscovus.

"Yes, but I must not anticipate. To-night the doctor, and I, and another, will tell you all."

"I am very glad," said Lal. "Was she named Lalage?"

"Yes, that was her name."

"It's the name of a crick, ain't it?"

"The name of a creek! No, my dear; what put that idea in your head? It means 'babbling' or 'prattling.' Perhaps it will suit you better when you get older, but it is not entirely misplaced now."

She laughed. "I thought you told me it was the name of a crick."

"No. Oh, I see how you are mistaken. I said it was a Greek name, not creek. The Greeks were a famous people in their time, and many of the names we use are the same that they gave to men and women."

She blushed a little. I'll larn better after a while," she said. "I don't know nothin' now, that's a fact."

It was nearly dark when they left the butte. Looking back, after they had gotten about half-way to Chetolah, Tyscovus saw the sky illumed by a bright red glow. It was the last of the giant pine-tree.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

LAL'S STORY IS TOLD.

It was after "tea," and all the inmates of Chetolah had assembled in the drawing-room. There were the doctor and Theodora, Mrs. Moultrie, her daughter Mrs. Sincote, Moultrie, Lal, and Tyscovus. The new-found member of the Moultrie family had been taken to the hearts of her grandmother, aunt, and her step-mother in expectancy, to say nothing of the affectionate greetings of her young cousin, Florence Sincote, who, after much persuasion on the part of her nurse, and reiterated commands from her mother, had just gone to bed. Conversation had ceased, for Geoffrey Moultrie had appointed that evening for telling the story of Lal's infancy and abduction, and, though it was familiar in all its details to his mother and sister, and partially known to the doctor and Theodora, it was absolutely a sealed book to two personages present, and certainly, next after Moultrie himself, the two most interested. Every one waited anxiously for the recital to begin, and all other subjects were so dwarfed in comparison with the one uppermost in their minds that general conversation was next to impossible.

It was all very strange to Lal, and she naturally felt under constraint. Her quick perceptions enabled her to see how different the women present were from those with whom she had heretofore come in contact—different in dress, different in manner, different in speech; and she

wondered whether she should ever be able to cross the deep gulf which stretched its wide expanse between her and them. Every one, however, was kind to her in a quiet, unobtrusive, non-patronizing way, that she was clever enough to appreciate. No one appeared to notice that she was in any wise different from the rest, and her father's loving glance was always there to reassure her. She sat by his side, holding his hand in hers, as though fearful that in some sudden and mysterious way he might be carried off bodily; or as if she might still need his protection from Jim Bosler and Luke Kittle, whose fate was yet unknown to her.

"It is for me," said Moultrie, at last, "to begin and end the history, though, as I told you to-day, Tyscovus, two others will relate important facts in corroboration of what I shall have to say. I shall not weary you with my whole autobiography, and I shall pass over very lightly all those details which, although essential to the full understanding of the subject, do not bear directly upon the events with which, at present, we are most concerned.

"It happened," he continued, "that when I was about twenty-one years of age, I was acting as an assistant to my father, who was engaged in constructing a railway from Warsaw to the southern part of Poland, the terminus in that direction not having been definitely determined upon by the government. Among the other assistants was a young Polish prince, Stephen Lutomski—" (Tyscovus started at the name, but said nothing)—"with whom I became very intimate. He was not rich. His patriotism would not permit him to enter the army when he left the university, and, as he had a taste for engineering, he had obtained a position in the corps of which my father was the head.

"The course of the road was not far from the old castle in which his mother and sister, his only near relatives, lived, and they often visited us in our camps, and I ac-

cepted several invitations to visit them. An attachment sprang up between his sister, the Princess Lalage, and myself, and eventually, with his and his mother's approval, sanctioned by the Czar, we were married.

"Shortly afterward, my father, who had, in conjunction with several Russian, English, and American capitalists, purchased a large tract of land in Western Kansas, deemed it necessary that some one acquainted with his ideas relative to its development, and in whom he had confidence, should go there to superintend the great interests involved; and the offer made was so advantageous in every way that, urged by my wife, as well as by my own convictions, I determined to accept the great responsibilities of the position of director. She was young, and, though, as I said, not rich, had been reared in ease, and was now about to make a sacrifice for me that I was fearful would tax her severely. I begged her to remain in Poland till I could go first, and make some preparations for her comfort, but she was one of those women whose chief happiness is in sharing the fortunes of their husbands, and whose ambitions are for his advancement; so she refused to be separated from me.

"We were not badly situated in our new home, which was not far from a fort garrisoned by United States troops. Among the officers was our friend Doctor Willis, then a young assistant surgeon, not much my senior in years. It was here, my dear child, that you were born.

"I knew very little of the people of the neighborhood outside of the fort. Some of them were industrious and honest settlers, others were of the very scum of the earth; many of both classes were employés of mine, either engaged in working the land, in looking after the numerous cattle belonging to the company, or acting as laborers to the surveyors who were laying out town-sites or farms.

"One day, when you, my dear child, were about three

months old, I was called to a distant part of the estate to examine a place where large deposits of coal were said to have been discovered. I bade your mother and you good-by, for I expected to be gone till late in the evening. You lay upon the bed, and stretched out your little hands as if really bidding me good-by." (Here Lal drew nearer to him and laid her head on his shoulder, while he tightened his hold on her hand.) "I never saw you again to know you, till I knelt a few days ago at the side of the bed upon which you lay senseless. When I returned, I found that you had been stolen, and that your poor mother was delirious, so that she could give me no account of what had happened. I ascertained, however, from your nurse, that, soon after my departure, a strange man had entered the room in which you were, had seized you in the very presence of your mother, had jumped through the window, and had disappeared with you in his arms. Messengers had been sent for me, but I had gone in another direction, and they failed to find me. The alarm had been given as soon as possible, but no one but your mother had seen the man, and she was out of her mind. The commanding officer of the fort turned out his troops, and they scoured the country in all directions; but nothing was ever discovered, so far as I then knew, leading to any information of you or your abductor. Your poor mother never recovered her reason, and in a few months she died."

(Tears were flowing down Lal's face, but she did not speak. She evidently scarcely perceived the connection between her abduction and her membership of the Bosler family.) After a few moments Moultrie continued:

"There is nothing more for me to say now, although, presently, I shall have a few other circumstances to relate; the rest of the story will be better told by others."

"I recollect very well," said the doctor, "when our friend brought his wife to the vicinity of Fort Kendrick,

where I was stationed as medical officer; I recollect, too, that some three or four months after their arrival, a daughter was born to them, and that I officiated at the birth. There was living near the fort a man named James Bosler, who, with his wife, occupied a quarter-section of land; but he did not till the ground. He was a seller of whisky to the soldiers, a gambler, and a horse-thief. The commanding officer had used every means in his power to get this man out of the neighborhood, but he successfully defied all attempts made to remove him. He lived just off of the reservation, and consequently the military authority had no real control over him, and the civil powers were too remote and inefficient to be invoked.

"Two days after you were born, Mrs. Bosler had a baby, over whose entrance into the world I also presided. There being no other physician, the settlers had to depend on me for such medical aid as they required, and, as a consequence, I was summoned from far and near. This baby was so much like you, Lal, that it became a subject of conversation whenever I paid my visits to your mother or to Mrs. Bosler. Some people, I know, can not see resemblances between infants. That is simply because they do not know how to look at a young child, or what features to examine. But here were the same black hair, the same shaped and colored eyes, the same delicately molded noses and ears—especially the ears, which should always be inspected when resemblance between babies is sought for; and the same matrix might have served for the hands and feet of both.

"Well, the two infants grew apace, the resemblance still continued, and then one day we were astonished on being informed by a messenger from Moultrie's that the baby had been stolen. The mother was in the room at the time; the abductor appeared to have entered by the window; but she could give no account of the affair, as she

was in a state of acute delirium. She could only make efforts to go to one of the windows of the room, and would have thrown herself out of it, had she not been prevented. As it was, her eyes were constantly turned toward it, and her hands stretched out in that direction. Hence, we concluded that the thief had entered and left through that opening.

"Search was, as Moultrie has said, made in every direction. Major Selfridge, the commanding officer, turned out a troop of dragoons, and they scoured the country, but without finding the least clew to the thief. Many supposed that a vagabond Kaw or Pawnee Indian had stolen the child, and means were taken to examine, with the utmost minuteness, all their camps and villages in the region, but without the least success. Large rewards were offered, five thousand, ten thousand dollars, and any amount would have been given if the faintest clew had been obtained. Then, shortly after the death of his wife, Moultrie went back to Poland, leaving me to continue the search, and to offer large sums of money for any information that could lead to the detection of the kidnapper or the recovery of the child.

"Bosler remained in the neighborhood for several years subsequently, following his disreputable occupations, and leading a dissipated life. One night at the sutler's store, to which he had come surreptitiously—for he had been prohibited entering the limits of the fort—while drinking with a party of teamsters, he made some assertions that led to the suspicion that he had been concerned in the abduction of the child. These were repeated to me; but when taxed with them and required to explain his meaning, he declared that when he spoke he was drunk, and that what he had said was entitled to no consideration. Every means was taken to elicit whatever knowledge he possessed, but all was in vain, and shortly afterward he removed from

that part of the country, taking his family with him. One night, soon after his departure, I was requested to visit a man who had been employed in the quartermaster's department as a blacksmith, but who had always been on terms of close intimacy with Bosler. The man had been in a broil, and had been shot so badly that I saw at a glance that he could live only a few hours at most. He perceived, from the expression of my face, that there was no hope; and, besides, the nature of his wounds was such that any man would have known that life was impossible.

"Seeing that he had not long to live, he requested every one else to leave the hut in which he lay, and then he whispered in my ear that Jim Bosler had, in a drunken rage, killed his own baby, and then, being sobered by the remorse which the crime had excited, and fearful of the effects upon his wife, who was absent for the day, he had stolen your child, Moultrie, and clothing it in his dead infant's apparel, had laid it in the bed as though it was his own. He added that he was present when Bosler killed his baby, and that he had assisted the murderer to bury the child in a spot that he indicated.

"I asked him whether or not Mrs. Bosler knew of the murder and the theft, and he answered that, so far as he had any knowledge, she was kept in ignorance of both facts, and had always believed the stolen child to be her own. At first, she had expressed a little surprise at what she thought were changed characteristics, but she had never suspected that anything was wrong.—But, good Heavens! what is the matter with the child?" he exclaimed, looking at Lal. Every one rushed toward her, as she lay senseless in her father's arms, for she had fainted.

"It is nothing," said the doctor, feeling her pulse; "place her on the floor, with her head low.—Dorie, my dear, don't you think a little ammonia would be of service? or would *eau-de-cologne* be sufficient? Yes, that will do,"

as half a dozen *vinaigrettes* were handed him. She will be all right in a minute or two."

"Are you sure there is no heart-disease, doctor?" inquired Moultrie, anxiously. "She went over so suddenly! I felt the clasp of her hand not a moment before she lost consciousness."

"Heart-disease?—fiddlesticks!" exclaimed the doctor, contemptuously.

"She might have overtasked her heart on that dreadful night, when she ran almost all the way from Bighorn Spring to the top of the butte," said Tyscovus. "She was thoroughly exhausted."

"Oh, yes," said the doctor, dryly, "heart-disease, doubtless, my friend; but not of the kind you refer to. Why, her heart is as sound as that of an antelope!"

"She is getting stronger every instant," said Theodora, who sat on the floor by her side, with her fingers on the wrist of the patient. "Poor dear!" she continued, "it was too much for her. But it had to come, sooner or later.—Have you not noticed, Geoffrey," raising her eyes to Moultrie as she spoke, "that for several days past she has been absent-minded, and at times very low-spirited? She has suffered greatly from the inability she experienced to answer questions she was continually asking herself."

"Yes," he replied, "it is better for her to know the worst at once, than to brood over the matter as she has been doing. No emotion, in my experience, is so wearing as anxiety. Think how she must have suffered as the wickedness of the man she had regarded for so many years as her father was gradually revealed to her!"

"And yet," said Tyscovus, "I could see, as the acts of the story were one by one unfolded, how bravely she was trying to bear up under the accumulation. Few women could have endured it all half so well."

"Well, it is not necessary for her to hear the rest," re-

marked the doctor. "She knows all that it concerns her to know now. There"—he continued, as Lal gave a long sigh and opened her eyes—she is all right now.—Here, my dear, drink this glass of wine, and then your father will carry you up-stairs and lay you on your bed. We will dispense with your society for the rest of the evening."

"And with mine too, papa?" said Theodora. "I will sit with her and talk with her a little."

"And mine?" "and mine?" exclaimed Mrs. Moultrie and Mrs. Sincote in a breath.

"Yes, you can all go; but mind you don't excite her with too much talking. If you are going to do that, she had better stay here."

In Geoffrey Moultrie's strong arms she was like a feather.

"She is quite well now, I think," he said, as he returned after an absence of a few minutes, "very happy and yet very sad. My heart bleeds for her every moment of my life. She is very glad that Mrs. Bosler had no hand in the fraud, and that she was not undeceived before she died. her love for the woman, who seems to have been always kind to her, is very great. What would it have been for her own mother had she ever known her?—But, doctor, go on with the story. I want Tyscovus to hear it out to the end."

"Very well," said the doctor; "but, now that the ladies are gone, we might as well light our cigars or pipes. Now," he resumed, as that operation was completed, "where was I? Oh, yes, I recollect!

"Well, after making the precious confession, the outlines of which I have related, the fellow lay quiet for a few minutes, and then he completed what he had to do in this world by dying. The spot which he had indicated as the one where he had assisted Bosler to bury the murdered baby was examined, and there, sure enough, the little skeleton was discovered.

"Inquiries were then made for Bosler, and at last he was found. On my affidavit, based on the dying words of the blacksmith, he was arrested, but the most searching examination failed utterly to fix the double crime or any part of it on him. He accounted for every minute of his time on the day the child was stolen, and he declared that the skeleton found was that of Moultrie's child, and that the blacksmith had probably been the kidnapper and the murderer. The baby in his possession was brought before the magistrate, and Mrs. Bosler and half a dozen other people swore that it was hers. One woman deposed that she had been in the house all day, and that any change of the babies, one for the other, would have been impossible without her knowledge. The grand jury refused to find an indictment, and Bosler was discharged. Some people thought that he had stolen Moultrie's child and subsequently killed it; others, that the blacksmith had committed both crimes; but no one, besides myself, thought that his tale was true, and that Bosler had possession of Moultrie's child.

"I communicated all these facts to Moultrie, but at the same time informed him that there was no prospect of his finding his daughter. Of course, if the girl in Bosler's possession were not surely his, he did not want it. Proof on that point appeared to be impossible. However, he came to Kansas—this is now fifteen years ago—and saw the baby, then a couple of years old, which the Boslers claimed was theirs. They made no objection to letting him see it. In fact, they offered every facility to him, and he went away with no more satisfaction than when he came. He could not identify the child. Last summer, when Theodora and I were at a quiet little place on the sea-shore to which we sometimes go, we met you, Moultrie. I had not seen you since your visit to Kansas, fifteen years before. We talked, of course, about your great loss, and I informed you that Bosler, his wife, and the child, now a young woman, were

living quite near us. I described her to you as minutely as I could, and you determined to come here and see her for yourself. You thought, from my description, that she strongly resembled your wife, and that if you could see her, you could identify her by some feature or gesture or habit that might be hereditary. I returned home, and only a few days ago, while you were on your way here, perhaps, I received such information as placed the fact of Lal's parentage beyond a doubt. I was satisfied that she was certainly your child.

"Now, Tyscovus, comes the part with which you are connected.

"When I was successful in saving the life of Abe Wilkins's baby, after you had had your contest with the father, and he had gone off with all your portable property, he not only, out of his gratitude to me, returned your effects, but a few days afterward told me a story that made my heart beat with joy. It was nothing else than a thorough corroboration of the account given to me by the blacksmith, and it was confirmed by the production of a necklace of gold beads, fashioned by some Circassian jeweler, which the child had worn at the time. But here, Wilkins will speak for himself. He has really reformed; partly influenced, I think, by his gratitude to me, and partly, perhaps mainly, by the fear that if he is not very careful his heart-disease will end his days soon and suddenly. Whatever the cause, I never saw so thorough a change in a man. He is really now quite a respectable member of society." The doctor rose and rang the bell. "Send Wilkins here," he said, to the servant. In a few moments the man entered the room.

"I didn't leave the place," he said to Tyscovus, "till the old woman and the boy got thar. I hired Alexander to bring 'em over. They'll look after things, and I'm goin' back to-night, anyway."

"Very well," said Tyscovus; "all will be cared for, I have no doubt."

"Sit down, Wilkins," said the doctor, "and then tell us what you told me the other day, and anything else that bears on the subject." Wilkins took the chair that was indicated to him, and then began his part of the story:

"You see, gents, the doctor had forgot all along, ef he ever knowed, that I war a teamster at Fort Kendrick when that 'ere baby war killed and the other stolen. Jim, and Toby, the blacksmith, and me war pards, and in course I knowed all as war a-goin' on. Not as I seen any of it, but I knowed it all the same; for pards don't have no secrets from one another.

"It war one day Jim and Toby war drinkin', and the baby war lyin' in bed in the same room. Jim war always a pretty hard cuss when he got too much, and this time he had it, I guess. The baby cried more'n Jim could stand with him full o' liquor, so he jist shook it a leetle, and then, as it bawled all the more, he give it a jerk out o' the bed, and it fell on the floor, and struck its head agin a pile o' old iron as war layin' thar, and then it stopped howlin' for good. For, gents, as I am a live man, that baby war a dead one.

"Jim and Toby was orful skeered, and Jim war jist about as sorry as a man could be. For, gents, afore God, I don't think he meant to kill that baby. His old woman war off somewhar, and Jim war afraid thar'd be bloody Moses to pay when she come home, and prehaps he be jerked up by the neck for killin' the baby. So what does he do, but start right off to Mr. Moultrie's, whar he said thar war a baby jist like his'n, and the same age, and, in less nor a half-hour, he war back with that baby! And a woman as war in the next room never knowed he war out o' the house. For, you see, Toby kept up laughin' and talkin' jist the same as ef Jim war thar.

"That's about the whole story, gents, jist as I've had it from Jim and Toby, both on 'em. Mrs. Bosler never knowed as the babies war changed, and that night Jim and Toby buried the other. Thar war a gold necklace around the other baby, and Jim give that to me for a mule, more'n ten years ago. I give it to the doctor."

"And here it is!" exclaimed Moultrie, taking, as he spoke, a little box from his pocket. "This is the identical necklace stolen with my child. It belonged to her mother. And here, you see, on the clasp, are the letter 'L' and a princess's coronet."

Tyscovus took the necklace and examined it with the utmost interest. It was, as the doctor had said, of Circassian workmanship, and the letter and coronet mentioned by Moultrie were distinctly visible. Even without Bosler's confession the evidence of Lal's identity would have been complete. And she was born of a Polish mother, a daughter of the noble house of Lutomski, whose origin was only a little later than his own, and her father was of the best blood in America! It was all very pleasant for him to know, but he thanked God that he had recognized the good that was in her, and had loved her while he thought she was the daughter of a horse-thief, a drunkard, a murderer, whose wickedness and depravity were almost beyond belief.

"That will do, Wilkins," said the doctor.—"His story, of course, has been put into the form of an affidavit," he continued, after the man had left the room. "Not that his oath is worth any more than his word, but as a formal measure.—Now, Moultrie, you have the finishing touches to give to this remarkable history."

"One of the chief objects I had in view," he observed, "was, as the doctor has stated, to see the girl that he said Bosler had with him and called his daughter. Of course, soon after my arrival, he told me of the information given him by Wilkins, and gave me the necklace. This latter I

at once recognized, and then I felt that at last my poor child was within my reach. Bosler's whereabout had not, however, been discovered, and I could not, therefore, proceed as rapidly in my efforts to recover my lost daughter as I desired.

"But, on the afternoon of the day on which she escaped from Bosler's clutches, I heard from Wilkins that the scoundrel had actually sold her to a man almost as bad as himself, and that a marriage, that would have been a mockery—for the fellow has a wife living in St. Louis—was arranged to take place on the following day. I had been offered, by prominent citizens, the leadership of the vigilance committee, and had declined it—not because of any conscientious scruples, but for the reason that I had other matters to engage my attention. Now, however, I saw that nothing was of more immediate importance than the recovery of my child at the earliest possible moment, and the punishment of the wretch who had stolen her from me and killed my wife. I therefore recalled my declination, accepted the position, and left that night at the head of a hundred men, for the purpose of going to Bighorn Spring, not only to save my child, but to punish the wicked man who was seeking to destroy her.

"It was late when we got to the Spring, and we were surprised to find no signs that the place was inhabited. We cautiously approached, we opened the doors—no one was there. My first thought was, that Bosler had carried her off, but information was then received, from scouts and spies, that he had been to the house, and was then, in company with Kittle, making his way back to The Cañon. I at once ordered a pursuit. I was relieved by the knowlenge that my daughter had escaped him, and the capture of the man was a secondary consideration. Still, I deemed it my duty to do my utmost to rid the country of such a monster, and I therefore directed that the command should

separate into four bodies, each of which should take a different route in their search. As you know, both men were caught—Kittle in the 'Little Cañon,' and Bosler at the butte. The trial was a fair one. I made no reference to my own wrongs at the hands of this man and his comrade. They were convicted of recent crimes, and the Territory is well rid of them. Of course, it was contrary to law to hang them, but every one must admit that there are times when law may properly be disregarded. It was an awful responsibility to assume, but I am sure the emergency was such as to justify the acts of the committee. '*Salus populi suprema lex est.*' I think you will admit," turning to Tyscovus as he spoke, "that everything was done decently and in order, except," he added, "hanging them on your premises."

"Yes," he answered "no honest jury in the world would have failed to convict them. Still, I think such a jury could have been found here."

"No, I inquired of the judge and of the sheriff before I accepted the leadership of the committee, and both told me that it would be impossible to get a jury entirely free from friends of those men. A trial would have resulted in a disagreement, and their discharge. I acted just as I would act were I to find it necessary to commit arson to save the lives of human beings. You or I would not hesitate in such a case. Firemen do it constantly. Why, then, should not homicide be committed to save the lives of many persons, endangered continually by lawless men acting in accordance with their own unbridled passions and inflamed by drink? You do not hesitate to kill the burglar that you catch in your house. You do not stop to think of the law when you discover a man assaulting a friend."

"Well," said Tyscovus, "perhaps something is to be allowed for the peculiar condition of affairs existing in countries situated as is Colorado."

"Thanks for that admission. It is the first time you have made it."

"And I have not yet congratulated you formally on the recovery of your daughter. Allow me to do so now," shaking Moultrie's hand as he spoke. "You are a brave man, a typical American, a man of the whole world, and, like all such men, free from local prejudices. I salute you," saying which Tyscovus made Moultrie a profound bow.

"Now let us hear no more about the vigilance committee and its deeds," said the doctor. "Moultrie went the next day, and informed the authorities of his part in the transaction. They declined to arrest him. In fact, as you know, there is but one sentiment here. If deemed necessary, a declaratory and exculpatory resolution will be introduced into the next Legislature; it will pass; the Governor will sign it, and then the acts will be formally legalized. In the mean time, our friend and his associates will be sustained by their own consciences and the voice of the people."

"Still," said Moultrie, "with my present knowledge, if I had the act to do over again, I would decline, and persist in my declination. Lal does not know that I had anything to do with the hanging of Bosler and Kittle, or in fact that they are hanged. Doubtless she will learn both, some day, but I wish her to be kept in ignorance as long as possible. In spite of his crimes, and his cruel treatment of her, he was, upon the whole, good to her after his fashion. She is one of those grateful souls that never forget kindnesses. No amount of ill-usage can, with such people, altogether obliterate the memory of affection that may have been shown toward them. They will resist oppression, they will fight in defense of their rights, but when they have become calm the old recollections return. I shrink, therefore, from letting her know of my part in the taking off of the man, for, I am afraid she would, if only for a

moment, think less of me than she does now. Her ideal would be desecrated ; and it is always dangerous to unmask a woman's idol."

"Yes," said Tyscovus, with a smile, "dangerous for the idol, and dangerous for the one who does the unmasking."

"But," resumed Moultrie, "you see I am, as you said, already regretting my act. My punishment has begun."

"And indeed, I hope it will not require many mental pangs to atone for your crime. But, that there should be some punishment, is altogether in accordance with the grand principles of eternal justice."

"Stop right there," exclaimed the doctor. "As the host of you both, I claim the right to say what subjects shall not be discussed in my house, and I forbid any further allusion to the vigilance committee, or Jim Bosler's execution. To-morrow is the election-day—I have thought over what you told me," addressing Tyscovus, "and I see you are right. Consider me on my knees, and asking your forgiveness for my intemperate language to you this afternoon."

"You refuse to accept an election after your friends have hanged your opponent?" said Moultrie, with a smile of pleasure on his face. "Of course, you are right; as I suppose you always would be on a question of morals or ethics."

"Yes, I shall decline. If, after that, a new election is ordered, and I am nominated, I shall accept. The opposition will then have time to select a candidate, and a fair vote can be had."

The three gentlemen continued the conversation into the small hours of the night, and settled many matters which the altered circumstances of the parties required should be adjusted.

As they were dispersing to their respective bedrooms, the doctor took Tyscovus aside.

"For several days," he said, "I have been conscious of a great change in the working of my mind. I see things differently from what I did. I now know that my ideas relative to women were exaggerated beyond all reason, and those that I entertained in regard to my daughter were very little if at all short of indicating insanity. In fact, I was a monomaniac. You have cured me. The way in which you rebuked me at the meeting the other night, so gently and yet with such firmness, was so unexpected, that a sudden awakening of my intellect on the points involved occurred, and I experienced an entire revolution of opinion. Everybody had been humoring me, under the idea that, if opposed, I would get worse, and even Theodora had that notion. Slight opposition certainly did have that effect, but such as yours, I saw at once, was not to be resisted. It was a shock to me, but it cured me. It seems to me, my friend," he continued grasping Tyscovus's hand in both of his and shaking it warmly, "that for an 'ass' you are a good deal of a man."

"Well," said Tyscovus, laughing, "I don't think I am an ass in the abstract. I am only 'John Buridan's ass,' and he was quite an exceptional animal."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

"WILL YOU BE MY WIFE, LAL?—GOOD-BY!"

For several days, nothing of special interest occurred at Chetolah. The election had taken place, and Tyscovus had received almost all the votes cast, save a few scattering ones in distant parts of the district, and had been declared duly elected. He had at once, however, notwithstanding the protestations and supplications of his political friends, such as Colonel Brattle and Mr. Higgins, written to the Governor, resigning the seat, and another election had been ordered.

He had not yet gone back to the butte, for he had been invited to stay at Chetolah till at least after the new election. He had been renominated, and, as there was no serious opposition to him in any part of the district, no doubt as to the result existed.

Lal had entirely recovered her health and strength, and every day the influence of her new associations was apparent. Moultrie devoted his time about equally to her and Theodora, between whom and Lal a warm affection had sprung up.

The two girls were one morning together in the laboratory, where Theodora was conducting an experiment relative to the analogies between the nerve-force and electricity, and Lal was having a world of wonders unfolded to her, by examining through a microscope a large number of preparations of the feet, heads, wings, and other parts of insects.

She had just been expressing her sense of astonishment at the foot of a horse-fly and the wing of a mosquito, when, influenced by the thoughts that crowded through her mind, she went over to where Theodora was at work, and stood by her side, watching the delicate manipulations that the difficult investigation required.

She was a very different-looking Lal from the one introduced to the reader in the second chapter of this history. All the resources of Hellbender in the way of millinery and dress-making had been drawn upon for her comfort and adornment, and a more or less experienced maid had been secured, whose duty it was to instruct her young mistress in all the intricacies of the toilet and of dress, as one of the fine arts. The result had been so astonishing that no one, who had not known of the process of transition that was going on, would have recognized, in the simply but elegantly dressed young lady the slovenly, shoeless, and stockingless girl of a month ago. Tyscovus had often looked at her in wonder, and could not but admit that the natural woman, no matter how true and honest she may be, is capable of being rendered more attractive by those devices that civilization has taught her to employ.

This morning she was dressed in an olive-green cashmere frock which fitted her graceful form to perfection. Around her neck was a plain, white linen collar and the gold Circassian necklace she had worn the day she was stolen, and which she seemed to value more than any other of her earthly possessions, with, perhaps, the exception of the book that Tyscovus had given her. Her hair was very simply dressed; its beauty required no adventitious aid, and her face and hands were clean. Lal had begun to learn the gospel of cleanliness before she came to Chetolah. She knew it by heart now.

Altogether, she was a very charming-looking girl, and Theodora gazed at her with undisguised admiration.

"You look as fresh and as sweet as one of my earliest garden-roses—one of my red roses," she said, smiling.

"I am glad you think so," replied Lal, as she laid her hand on Theodora's shoulder; "it's all so new to me, and I ain't hardly got use to it yit. I suppose I will in time, and I try hard, yes, very hard, not to feel proud. You'll help me, won't you? It's a hard thing as I've got to do, and sometimes I think as I moughtn't do jist as I ought, and jist as you and my father would like me to do, and *him*—and that makes me afeared."

"Don't be afraid, dear," said Theodora, kissing her; "you are very sweet, and I am certain you will not be spoiled by the good fortune that has come to you."

"You'll be my mother soon?"

"Yes, dear, so far as I can be."

"Very soon?"

"In less than a month. Then we go East. Your father is anxious to have you live in New York, while you are being educated, and I agree with him entirely. The advantages there, outside of the instruction you will receive from teachers, are such as you can not get anywhere else in this country."

"I'm glad I'm to be with you and my father. I'm glad you're going to be my mother, though I guess as you ain't much older nor me."

"Four or five years only."

"It ain't much; but you knows, I guess, more'n I'll know, if I live to be a hundred. Will you keep on studyin' after you're married?"

"I expect to study as long as I live. Your father would not like me to give up all my work."

"But you'll give up some?"

"Yes, I shall give up a good deal, because I shall have him to study, and that will take much of my time."

"Will you have a lab—a laboratory then?" pronouncing the word with difficulty.

"No, dear, the laboratory will, probably, have to go. I shall not care for it."

"You'll read a good deal, in course?"

"Yes, I shall always read much. That is one of the things every woman should do."

"Will *he* go East with us?"

"No, I think not."

"I'm sorry for that. I'd like him to be with us," said Lal, her whole manner becoming more grave, "because, you see, he war the one as give me a start. Ef it hadn't 'a' bin for him, I'd 'a' bin a thief."

"He was very kind to you, dear."

"He's a good man."

"Yes, he is one of the best men I ever knew."

Lal threw her arms around Theodora's neck, and the two stood, without either speaking a word, closely clasped in each other's embrace. How much longer they would have remained thus had it not been for an interruption that occurred, is a point that will never be determined, even if it were of the least consequence. Embraces of the kind are awkward things to break up in cold blood. It is always better when some one else disrupts them. This one was broken by Moultrie.

"Lal, dear," he said, as he entered, giving as he spoke a grateful look to Theodora, "I have just left Mr. Tyscovus, and I told him you would see him in the library where he is awaiting you. He will have something very important to say to you, my child," he continued, putting his arm around her waist, "in which he has my entire approval. I hope you will be able to answer him according to his wishes, for he is a good man in the noblest and truest sense of the words."

"He's the first real friend as ever I had," she answered.

"He mought 'a' sent me to jail, I guess. Yes, he's bin good to me, and thar ain't nothin' as I wouldn't do for him."

"Don't promise till you know what he wants you to do," said Moultrie, smiling. "Now go and give him his answer."

She raised his hand to her lips and left the room.

When Lal entered the library, she did so in such a quiet manner that Tyscovus, who was sitting in front of the fire, with his back partly turned to the door, did not hear her approach. She saw that she was not observed, so with her lightest step on the thick Indian rug, and with that smile on her face that won all hearts to her, she advanced till she stood close behind him, without being perceived.

It was the first time they had been alone together since her arrival at Chetolah. She remembered that, once before, she had stood near him without his having been aware of her presence and that then he was as deep in thought as he appeared to be now. The whole scene came before her. She took the little vellum-bound book from the pocket of her frock, and then, holding it in her hand, stepped quietly around till she stood before him. He saw her then instantly, and sprang to his feet.

"Miss Moultrie!" he exclaimed.

For a moment she looked surprised. Then tears started to her eyes. "No," she exclaimed; "ef I'm Miss Moultrie to you, I guess you'd better take back the book." She held it toward him as she spoke, but with a manifest effort controlled herself.

"Lal, then," he said, taking the hand that held the book and keeping it in his—"my Lal!"

"Yes," she murmured, softly, while her own sweet smile lit up her face, "I'm your Lal. I'll be your sister ef you'll let me, and you'll teach me some of them great things as you knows and writes about."

"Lal, my darling," he rejoined, taking her head be-

tween his hands and looking lovingly into her eyes, "I don't want you for my sister. I want you to be my wife; and it was to tell you this that I asked your father to send you here. Will you be my wife, Lal?"

"No! no!" she sobbed, "I can't—not as I wouldn't like to, but I'm not fit to be your wife."

"Why, dear?"

"Because, I don't know nothin' as I ought to know. Onst I'd 'a' said yes, but now I knows what a ignorant and rough gal I am. No, no, I'm not fit to be your wife."

"But you love me, Lal, don't you?"

"Oh, yes, more'n I love any one else in the whole world—more'n I love my dear father. Ef I didn't love you so much, I'd be your wife quick enough, I tell you!"

"Then you won't marry me, because you love me too much?"

"I guess that's about it," she said, with a sob between every two words. "I ain't worth much, I guess," she continued, while Tyscovus bent his head and kissed her lips. "My talk ain't like your'n"—another kiss—"and ef I war your wife you mought be ashamed o' me after a while"—several kisses. "Ef I didn't keer for you quite so much, I'd marry you right away, ef you wanted me to."

"Then, dear, I shall have to ask you to care for me a little less," said Tyscovus, smiling, "for I want you to marry me 'right away.' But come, sit here on the sofa, close by my side while I say something to you. First, however, you must answer me a few questions. Do you really love me, Lal?"

"Yes. Oh! thar ain't no doubt o' that."

"Say 'Yes, John.'"

"Yes, John. That's your first name, ain't it?"

"Say 'Yes, dear John.'"

"Yes, dear John. Oh, you're very dear to me, and you'll be jist as dear ef I live to be a thousand years old."

"Thanks, dear Lal; now we understand each other, and now I can say what is on my mind.

"I think I loved you a little soon after I first saw you. I heard you pleading with the man you thought was your father to stop drinking whisky, and to go away to some place where you could begin the world anew and improve your mind. I knew then, dear Lal, that you had a heart, and that you had good sense. There was an earnestness, a sincerity about you, that drew me to you in spite of myself, for I had come here to do a special work in which my heart was engaged, and which required, as I thought, my undivided energies and attention, and I resisted, as best I could, the first promptings of a love that I know now can never die.

"But I did not begin to know you till you brought back to me the little book that you found on the butte. Then I perceived that you had that power of self-examination without which no one can be either good or great, unless it is the negative goodness of the idiot or the unavoidable greatness of the sovereign. And not only this, but that you had the honesty of purpose and the strength of will to do what you thought was right."

Lal nestled closer to him, but her heart was too full for speech. After a moment's pause, he continued:

"The more I saw of you, and the better I knew you, the more I was convinced that my first impressions of you were correct. And my love for you deepened with every instant of my life. It made no difference to me, after I knew my own heart, whether you were really the daughter of a man who had shocked all good citizens with his crimes, or of one that the whole country respects and honors. I had discovered what *you* were, and that was enough for me. And yet I am not so blind as not to see the advantages to you of the great change in your condition that has taken place. I only mean to say that, high or low, rich or poor, learned or unlearned, my love for you would

have been the same. I do not love you because you are beautiful; neither do I hold back my affection because your speech is the dialect of the people among whom your life has been spent. But I *do* love you because you are true, because you wish to do right, and because when you look at me as you do now, dearest, your whole soul speaks through your eyes, and I know that it will be tender and loving and faithful through all the good, or all the ill, that life is able to afford. And that is why I want you to be my wife. You will make me happy, and I will try to make you happy."

"And you think I'm all that, and that I kin be some sort of a companion to you? I knows I ain't the kind of a one as I'd like to be, but I don't think I kin stand out ag'in you any more; and ef you're quite sure—oh! so sure," she continued, rising from the sofa and standing in front of him, looking just as she did when she rose to her feet after her prayer that angels might guard him—"so sure that you feel it in your heart jist as I feel my love for you, why, then I'll be your wife, your loving wife, always to keer for you and happy ef you'll let me be whar you air. Yes, I'll be your wife; God help me to be a good one!"

Long before she had finished she was clasped to his heart. Let us forbear to pry any further into their words and actions, for they concern them alone.

Events moved quickly in Colorado in those days. Tyscovus was anxious to be married at once, but Moultrie would not listen to such a thing. He insisted that Lal should spend at least two years in the East, so that she could become acquainted with her relations, and see something of the world, to say nothing of receiving such education as would fit her to be a gentleman's wife. Tyscovus had replied that he could instruct her himself, that it would be the joy of his life to act as her mentor, but Moultrie had firmly adhered to his original idea.

"My dear Tyscovus," he said, after they had had at least half a dozen other discussions on the same subject, "I am obliged to live in New York, and I think it highly necessary that Lal should have the advantages of association with her mother, and other refined and educated women. Theodora loves her devotedly, not only because she is my child, but because she finds in Lal what you found—qualities of mind that are sufficient to endear her to all who know her. Remember that she has never had the society of women; not even of such as belonged to the same grade of people as those among whom she has lived. There are a thousand things she must learn that you can never teach her, simply because you are a man, and these are things that only women can teach. Besides—and this I think is an important point—she is only seventeen years old; at least two years too young to enter upon the marriage relation. Therefore, my friend, in her interest, as well as in yours, I can not yield. There will be enough for you to teach when you are married."

"I suppose I shall have to submit; but you will allow me to come and see her?"

"Yes, twice a year, for two weeks at a time. Surely," he added, laughing, "when you consider that she will have her brain taxed to its utmost, with studies of all kinds, you must admit that I am liberal. I don't believe there will be much studying while you are in New York."

"And we may write to each other?"

"Oh, yes!" laughing heartily at the sorrowful tone of Tyscovus's voice, and at his rueful countenance. "I'm not such a tyrant as to forbid your writing to her, or her to answer your letters. Once a week, though, will be sufficient."

"I suppose you are right, but it's very hard on me, and on her too, I think."

"Yes, the separation will be hard for both of you to

bear, but she knows it is for her good, and, what is more with her, for yours also. Besides," he added, with a tone of elation in his voice, "she recognizes the fact that she is my child, and that my guardianship of her has not ceased."

"God forbid," said Tyscovus, with feeling, "that I should ever do or say anything to her to weaken that sense! My entreaties have been addressed to you only."

"I know it, my friend. You are loyality personified."

A few days afterward, Moultrie and Theodora were quietly married, and the whole Chetolah family were on their way to the railway-station at Bullion City. Tyscovus was at the butte, and it was arranged that the carriages should take the road that passed by his cabin, and that the last farewells should be spoken where he and Lal had first met. The election had, as was expected, resulted in his return by an almost unanimous vote, and in a couple of weeks he was to take his seat as a member of the Legislative Council of the Territory. He had endeavored to accept, in good faith, the arrangement made relative to his own marriage, and had at last brought himself to the conviction that Moultrie's plan was altogether wise and right. He had written to his agent in Warsaw to accept offers he had received for the valuable salt, iron, and zinc mines that he owned in Austrian Poland, near Cracow and Krzezowice, and from which he derived a revenue of nearly a hundred thousand dollars a year. He had received the plans for the house that he intended to build on the butte, and they had been adopted, after Moultrie, Theodora, the doctor, and Lal had each examined and approved them with very slight modifications. Work was to be begun on it the following day, and already a camp of workmen had been formed on the plain at the foot of the butte.

Lal had received the bequest of Manuel Vaca, and had, with her father's consent, established a trust, of which he, the doctor, Tyscovus, and Mr. Higgins, were the trustees,

the nature of which was, that the income was forever to be used for the education of poor girls living at The Cañon. This act had been a very popular one, and had endeared Lal at once to the people of the Territory.

Tyscovus looked at his watch, and found that in a few minutes he ought to be seeing the train of vehicles rounding the point at the distance of several miles from the butte, on the Hellbender road. At last they came in sight —three carriages for the travelers, and two light wagons for the baggage. It would be at least a half an hour before they arrived at the butte, and then he should watch them once more as they went on their way, carrying with them all that he held dear on earth. How strange it all was, that he should have come to that place in search of solitude, and for the purpose of accomplishing a work of which he had thought for years, and that in a few weeks all the objects and plans of his life should have been superseded by others still dearer to him! "Upon what," he asked himself, "can a man depend in this world, if his deepest-laid schemes are subject to overthrow such as has befallen mine? What security have I that the events that now await fulfillment will ever reach maturity? Two years!—two long and weary years, during which she will see other men, for whom she may forget me. Her life is all before her. Mine has almost reached its acme. Is it possible that, among all those who will surround this rich and beautiful girl, there will not be some one that she will love—some one younger, handsomer than the one whom she now thinks is perfection, possibly because she has had no experience with the rest of mankind?

"How will she bear her prosperity? Will her heart become corrupted by the pomps and vanities of the world of fashion into the very vortex of which she may be drawn? And then, if she does come back, will she be worth taking the place of the true-hearted Lal, who is now leaving me,

her whole soul filled with the love I have inspired?" Ah, well! those were questions, born of a lover's fears, which no living man or woman could answer. This was one of those instances where Faith comes in, and where Knowledge does not show her face.

"Yes!" he exclaimed, "my faith is supreme. Here I stand! God help her and me!"

He kept his eyes fixed upon the carriages that rapidly approached the butte, and that in a few minutes would bring their inmates to the plateau. He went out to meet them. Yes, they were already ascending the winding road, and he could, even now, exchange greetings with his friends, as in following the spiral direction the carriages came nearer and nearer to the top. At last the summit was reached, and the travelers descended and entered the house, where a simple luncheon had been prepared for their refreshment.

"I have no wine," said Tyscovus, "but I shall make tea after our Polish fashion, and in that we will drink to a safe and prosperous journey, and a happy reunion." The *samovar* was hissing on the table, and in a few minutes the toast was drunk with as much gayety as each could assume; though it was evidently forced on the part of at least two of the party.

Then the farewells began to be spoken, and one after the other had taken their last adieus, till only Lal remained. She looked around the room. They were alone. In an instant she was folded in his arms.

"Oh! it's harder to go nor I thought," she sobbed. "You're all the world to me, I guess. I don't see as I kin go. No! no! I jist can't go."

"Be calm, darling. You know I shall be here on the butte where we first met, and that every moment of my life will have its thoughts of you."

"It war right here whar I stood when I first loved you

—here whar I knowed as thar war better things in the world nor what I knowed of afore, and it war you as larnt 'em to me."

"Yes, dear Lal, it was here that you said 'Good-by,' and darted from the room before I could speak to you."

"And now I'm goin' agi'n, and for two long, long years; but now I knows as you love me," she continued, with more steadiness in her voice, "and that's a great thing for me. Here's my book," taking, as she spoke, the little vellum-bound volume from the bosom of her frock. "Every night, afore I go to bed, I read in it, and then I always think o' you, and o' that day. Oh, yes! always o' you."

"God bless you, my darling, my prairie rose, and send you back to me to be my own sweet wife, with your heart as good and true as it is now!"

"Don't you never think nothin' bad o' me," she exclaimed, passionately. 'Thar ain't ary a thing in all the world as could make me forgit you. Kiss me"—turning up her face, upon which smiles and tears appeared to be struggling for the mastery. "Onst ag'in. Good-by!" and then tearing herself from arms that seemed as though they could never let her go, she rushed from the room.

He did not follow her. He stood for a moment with bowed head and with his hands covering his face. Then he went to the window and watched the carriage that bore her away from him, while it grew fainter and fainter in the distance, and finally faded out from his gaze on the long, yellow road that lay like a huge snake on the prairie.

THE END.

MAR 1 3 1918